Hafa Adai!

New Japan consul calls on Apatang. PAGE 2
Man accused of CW-1 visa fraud is found guilty. PAGE 6

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ON BONUSES FOR GOVT RETIREES

Lawmakers still deadlocked

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The House of Representatives did not act yesterday on the Senate's version of a legislation for the government retirees' $1,000 bonus and, instead, passed another version of a bill to pave the way for the bonuses.

House did not act on Senate's legislation for retirees' bonus; passes own version instead

With 14 voting "yes," only Rep. Patrick San Nicolas (R-Tinian) voting "no," and five absences, the House passed House Bill 22-95 to amend the Appropriations Act of Fiscal Year 2022 to establish a business unit and fund the retirees' bonus. The bill now goes to the Senate for action.

This means that government retirees will have to wait a while longer for the bonuses that Gov. Ralph DLG Torres had promised to release before Christmas of 2021.

On the agenda during yes-

See LAWMAKERS on Page 4

Torres moves to dismiss Articles of Impeachment

> 'Constitution limits House to removing an official, yet Articles of Impeachment want to bar Torres from seeking re-election this November'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Saying it "irreparably violates" the mandate of the CNMI Constitution, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has asked the Senate to dismiss the Articles of Impeachment lodged against him by the Democrat-controlled House of Representatives.

In his 27-page motion to dismiss filed before the Senate Monday, Torres, through his lawyer, Anthony H. Aguon, said if the Senate decides that it would like to receive testimony and additional evidence before ruling on the dismissal motion, then he is prepared to do so at a hearing on the merits

See TORRES on Page 4

Rise in fuel prices result in FAC increase

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. has been notified by its fuel supplier, Mobil Oil Mariana Islands Inc., that there has been an increase in the average international fuel oil prices that will affect the Fuel Adjustment Charge. As a result, the current FAC rate of $0.27122 per kilowatt-hour will increase to $0.34564 per

See RISE on Page 4

OAG is suing J&J firms over opioid abuse in the CNMI

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI Office of the Attorney General is suing one of the largest pharmaceutical firms in the United States over what it describes as "deceptive opioid marketing that has re-

See OAG on Page 4

TINIAN SCHOOL JOINS ADOPT-A-MEDIAN

GCEA

Tinian Elementary School students and staff rehabilitate and repaint the schools' curbs last March 7-9 as part of the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers' Marianas Village Pride Campaign's Adopt-A-Median program. The initiative not only beautified the school's surroundings but also enhanced visibility for motorists when students are getting dropped off or picked up.

Story on Page 6

AT A GLANCE

As of 5:46pm, March 29, 2022

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population Additional Dose Vaccinated:	59.9%
Days since last community transmission	2

Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	38,172
Fully Vaccinated:	37,389
Moderna	
Initiated:	5,348
Fully Vaccinated:	5,211
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	1,151
Additional Dose:	22,356

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	47,122	59	47,181
Recovered	45,892	95	45,987
Active	792	59	851
Deaths	342	1	343

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	11,022	43	11,065
Recovered	10,850	97	10,947
Active	42	43	85
Deaths	33	0	33

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

INSIDE

NATION
At least three people are killed and more than a dozen others injured on a Pennsylvania highway.

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WORLD
Ukrainian forces claimed to have retaken a Kyiv suburb and an eastern town from the Russians.

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LIFE & STYLE
Will Smith issues an apology a day after slapping Chris Rock at the 94th Academy Awards.

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Local

Camacho: CUC's renewable energy plan still in the works

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. will soon be doing an research study that will determine the type of power plant the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota will need, with a great emphasis on renewable energy, according to CUC executive director Gary P. Camacho.

He said the research study will be a comprehensive decision-support mechanism that creates a long-term roadmap using financial modeling and technical analysis to determine the best options for supplying electricity over the long run at the least possible cost on Saipan and Rota. It will be funded by the Northern Marianas Housing Corp. through the U.S. Department of Housing Urban Development.

Camacho said they want to continue to have these studies and review them to ensure that they acquire the latest technology and the most appropriate and efficient and effective equipment for the CNMI's power supply, moving forward.

LEIGH GASES
CUC executive director Gary P. Camacho.

CUC already has an Integrated Resource Plan that was adopted in a board meeting last year. That Integrated Resource Plan, Camacho said, tells CUC to prepare a diesel power plant with 10 megawatts of solar power.

The upcoming study will tell CUC "the type of power plant, how much solar, or if wind is something to be considered, battery storage, or diesel, all of those are going to be studied and then provide us with the best-case scenarios and multiple different options," added Camacho.

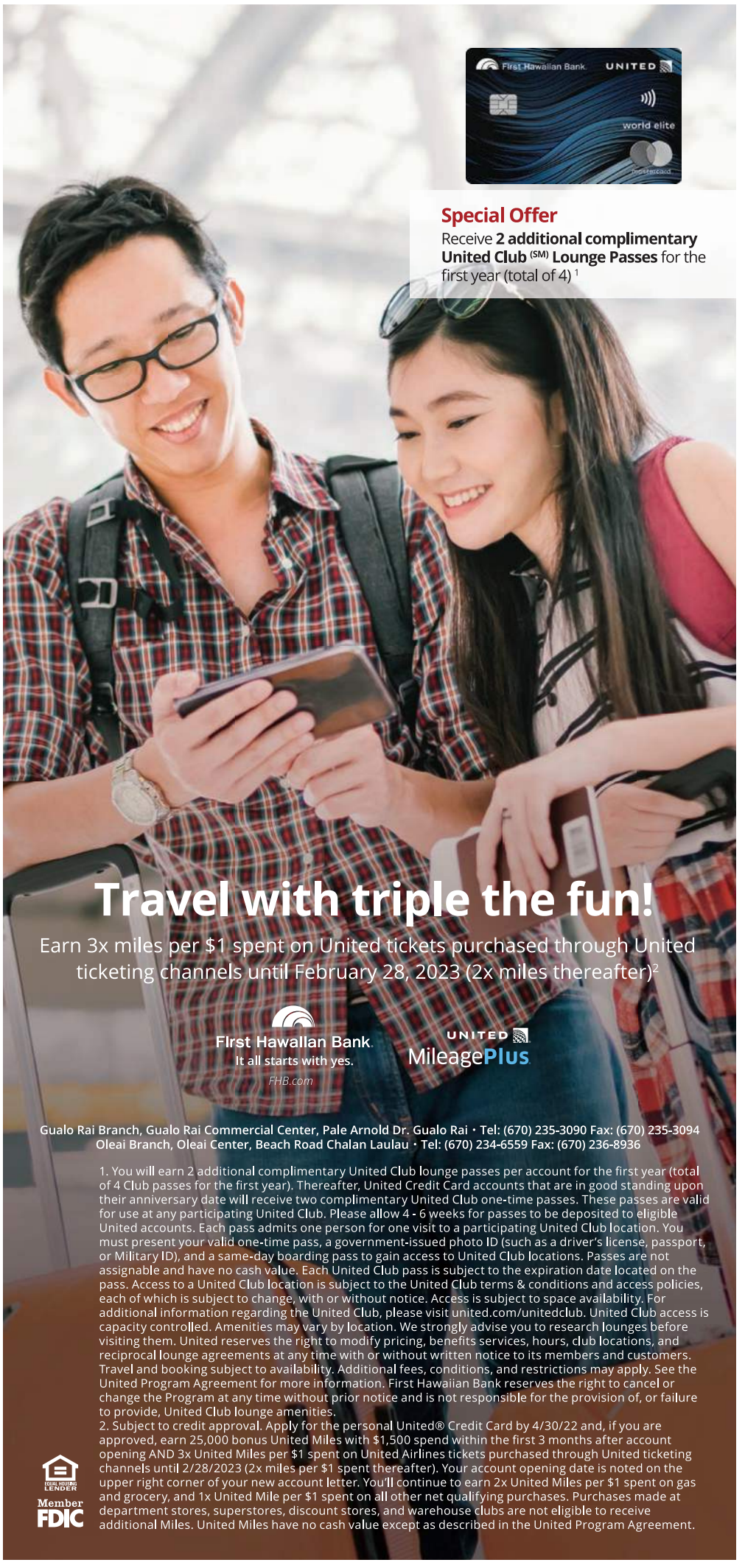
When asked if it's possible for the CNMI to be on 100% renewable energy, Camacho said it is not possible. "Let's just say you've got 10% of the island demand, which would be 3 megawatts because the peak demand is 3.7…so, 3% of 10% is three megawatts. …Then you have a cloud come over and you lose 10% of your demand. … When you lose 10%, something has to produce power, which is the power plant," said Camacho. The change goes from renewable energy to power plant, and Camacho said that if this goes on all day it will hurt the engines.

Camacho said there are many factors that a system has to be prepared for to ensure that nothing is jeopardized. In any consideration for a new power plant, CUC is always looking for renewable energy. He added that they had an Integrated Resource Plan that was performed a while back, but now they have a new IRP that includes renewable energy. "We're going to be designing our power platform with consultants and experts in the field, and we're going to make it clear that we want to maximize renewable energies and expand our portfolio," said Camacho. A new IRP needs to be done again because the study has a lifespan of about five to six years.

Camacho added that renewable energy is something he wants to prioritize, and that CUC is always interested in maximizing. "We've had a system that's somewhat aged as far as production is concerned…so, we would just always work on ensuring that although we've been accepting renewables, we want to make sure that we have a system. It's our responsibility to ensure that any penetration does not negatively impact our power supply," said Camacho.

When asked what Camacho thinks will happen as a result of the study, he said a "determination based on conditions, locations, seasons, and demand is a wide range but I'm excited because the new technologies that are available today and the advancements of old technologies, such as greater efficiency on diesel, greater efficiency on battery storage and greater efficiency on solar and wind. There's wind towers that can be adjusted and brought down due to storms or tilted down."

Lastly, he said there's a variety of different things that will be determined in the study but the experts and consultants or any responsible qualified firm will be working closely with CUC and stakeholders on the type of power plant that will be built in the future. "At the end of that study, of course, will be a list of different types of options based on scoring. And we'll go forward with that direction," Camacho added.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Member FDIC

New Japan consul calls on Apatang

The new Head of Office of the Consulate Office of Japan, Consul Ryoji Takagaki, and his staff, James Sakamoto, recently visited Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang at the mayor's office in Oleai.

In their March 22, 2022, meet and greet, Apatang expressed his deepest appreciation to Takagaki for visiting him and the opportunity to talk about how Japan and Saipan can continue its wonderful relationship that began more than a century ago.

"We are excited about the future for Japan and Saipan, despite the pandemic that has impacted travel between Japan and Saipan," said Apatang. "Last year, Katori City Mayor Seichi Ui and I concluded the sister city agreement in a virtual ceremony and it is my hope that your office will continue to be a part of our sister city relationship and our student exchange program, which gives many young students a unique opportunity to experience our way of life here [on] Saipan and also life in Japan. …It is our duty to make sure our young generations know our long history and our commitment to peace."

Takagaki said he is "excited to be here on this beautiful island of Saipan."

"It is my hope that I can continue the work of my office here in serving our Japanese community and working alongside the CNMI government and your office," added Takagaki. "The pandemic is very difficult on many people, and it is my hope that our way of life will return to normal in Japan and Saipan and everywhere in the world soon." ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The new Head of Office of the Consulate Office of Japan, Consul Ryoji Takagaki, center, shakes hands with Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang, left, during a visit at the mayor's office in Oleai. At right is the mayor's senior adviser, Henry Hofschneoider.

Man allegedly beats ex-girlfriend over an air purifier

A man was arrested last week for allegedly beating his former girlfriend, who is the mother of his child, over an air purifier.

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho imposed a $10,000 cash bail on Roland Benavente Salas, 36, who is accused of beating his former girlfriend after claiming that she stole his air purifier.

During a bail hearing last Friday, Camacho allowed Salas to post 10% of his bail, $1,000, as a secured bond for his release on the charges of disturbing the peace to include domestic violence and assault and battery.

Salas, following the hearing, was released and was ordered to return to court on April 1, at 10am for a preliminary hearing while his arraignment was set for April 4, at 9am.

According to court documents, Department of Public Safety officers reported to a disturbance at a residence in San Vicente last Feb. 4, at about 7:19pm but it wasn't until Feb. 28 when police met with the victim to interview her.

The victim told police that about two months into her relationship Salas, she became pregnant with their son but their relationship ended during her pregnancy.

Then, on the evening of Feb. 4, the victim said she went to the apartment they previously shared in San Vicente to pick up their son. About five minutes later, the victim said Salas allegedly asked her where his air purifier was, to which she responded it was for their son and that it was at her parents' house in San Vicente.

The victim said that Salas stormed out of the office area of the apartment at that point, grabbed her hair with his left hand, and was standing over her telling her, "Didn't I tell you to stop stealing." The victim said Salas then hit the right side of her head once and kicked her on her legs.

As the victim tried to get away, Salas allegedly smacked and punched her, swinging his right arm and hitting her, causing her to fall and hit her head on a nearby chair.

She said she got a bump and cut on her forehead which she photographed and showed police.

After hitting her, Salas allegedly asked her what happened, as if he was trying to manipulate her into believing he didn't hit her.

The victim also told police that in the past, Salas strangled when she was eight months and would constantly hit her in places not visible to the public like her thighs and arms. ***(Kimberly B. Esmores)***

'Local stimulus payment exempt from earnings tax'

This tax announcement provides information and guidance regarding the Local Economic Impact Payment.

CNMI Public Law 22-15, enacted on March 18, 2022, amends 4 CMC Section 1202 to add subsection (e) that excludes the $500 local stimulus payments from earnings tax. Subsection (e) states, "Stimulus payments received from the Commonwealth pursuant to the 2021 ARPA Local Stimulus Plan are not subject to the tax imposed under this section."

The LEIP is includible in NMTIT and reported on Schedule 1CM, Line 8z as other income, but exempted from earnings tax.

Early filers may amend

Taxpayers who filed their 2021 Income Tax return prior to the enactment of Public Law 22-15 or the date of this announcement should check with their tax preparers as soon as possible to see if they should amend their 2021 tax return. An amendment may cause delays in the issuance of refunds.

For more information, contact the Division of Revenue and Taxation at (670) 664-1040 or by email at revtax-info@dof.gov.mp.

Unlike the Economic Impact Payments which are not taxable income and not reportable for income tax purposes, the LEIP is taxable under the Northern Marianas Territorial Income Tax. However, as stated above, Public Law 22-15 exempts the LEIP from earnings tax. ***(PR)***

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JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

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P.O. Box 505979 CK Saipan, MP 96950

Accountant

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Location of Employment: Saipan
Applicants for this position must have a Bachelor's Degree in Accountancy with 60 months work experience as an Accountant. Interested applicants should send their application and resume to the employer (by mail: P.O. Box 505979 CK Saipan, MP 96950; by email: Where_Is_Amelia@hotmail.com).

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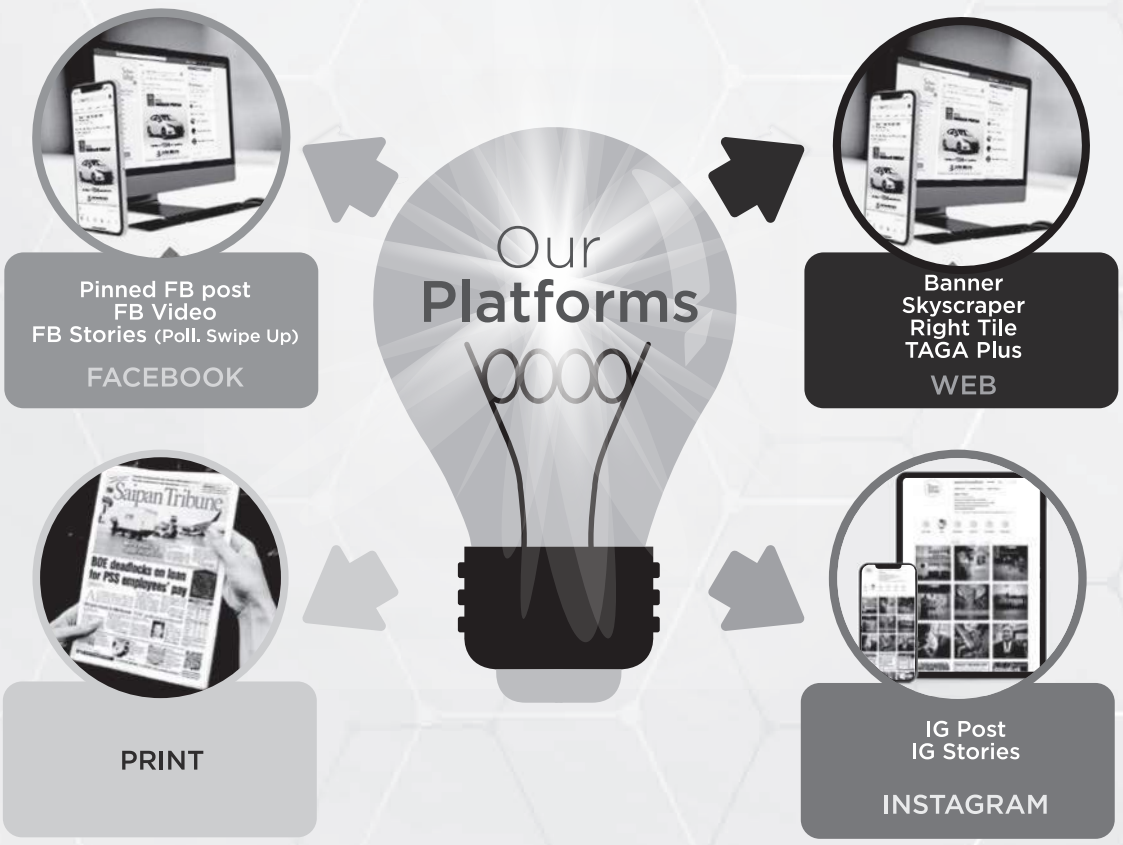

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COVID update: 43 new cases; 1 hospitalized

As of March 28, 2022, the CNMI was down to just one person hospitalized as a result of COVID-19.

Also, 43 additional individuals have been confirmed positive for COVID-19, bringing the CNMI total to 11,065 cases since March 28, 2020.

Of the 43 cases, three were identified on March 27, 2022; 12 on March 26, 2022 (one on Tinian); 23 on March 25, 2022 (one on Tinian); and five prior to March 25, 2022.

CHCC also stated that, instead of daily reports, starting with Monday's news release, COVID-19 updates will now be reported weekly, with the next report on April 4, 2022.

In Guam, the Joint Information Center was notified that the territory's 343rd COVID-19-related fatality occurred at the U.S. Naval Hospital Guam on March 29, 2022. The patient was an 87-year-old male, fully vaccinated with a booster, who had underlying health conditions and tested positive on March 28.

"We join the island in mourning the loss of another member in our community, and pray for his family's strength and comfort during this tragic time," said Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero in the JIC news release. "As we see our cases continue to fall, we must continue to recognize that this is still a deadly virus and that we must take every precaution to protect ourselves and our loved ones from exposure."

This came even as Guam reported 59 new cases and 17 hospitalized because of COVID-19.

Of the 11,065 total cases that have been identified in the CNMI so far, there have already been 10,947 recoveries; 85 active cases; and 33 COVID-19-related deaths. Of these numbers, 10,252 were identified via community testing and 813 via travel testing.

A total of 411 COVID-19 tests were conducted March 25-27, 2022: 390 via Community-Based Testing; 16 at the Koblerville COVID-19 Community Center; and five at the Rota Health Center. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

TORRES

From Page 1

of the Articles of Impeachment charges, or such other time as the Senate prefers, prior to it addressing the merits.

Aguon said the AOI also contravenes due process for a number of reasons, including the House's failure to comply with the statutory laws and House rules applicable to it and its members.

The lawyer said the AOI is constitutionally defective as the House acted in excess of its constitutional mandate and seeks a greater penalty than is constitutionally allowed.

Aguon said the analysis of the CNMI Constitution expressly instructs that "the only sanction available against a governmental official who is impeached is removal from office." Therefore, the Constitution limits the House to only removing an official from office, he said.

In this case, Aguon said, the AOI seeks to impose a penalty or sanction that bars Torres from being a candidate for reelection in 2022. He said the AOI demands this unconstitutional penalty and sanction a total of six times.

The lawyer said the numerous insistence on disqualifying Torres from the 2022 election indicate that the House is knowingly requiring imposition of the unconstitutional penalty or sanction. Aguon said the AOI's unconstitutional penalty or sanction renders it null and void and it "cannot be deemed effectual."

He said impeachment is not a felony that would preclude a person from running from office. He said basic research establishes that the House knew or should have known that removing Torres from office would not be a felony conviction that would disqualify him from running for office pursuant to Article 3 of the CNMI Constitution.

He said the House was obviously aware of this fact, in as much as Rep. Sheila J. Babauta (D-Saipan) acknowledged in a statement before the Senate that an impeachment "is not a criminal case."

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

RISE

From Page 1

kWh effective April 1, 2022.

The FAC is one of two components that make up the CUC electric kWh rate, which is used to purchase fuel. The second component is the CUC base rate, which is used to fund operations, projects, and debt service. This base rate has not been increased since April 17, 2014.

CUC is required, pursuant to an order previously issued by the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission, to adjust (up or down) the FAC pass-through rate when the Mean of Platts Singapore monthly pricing equals or exceeds a 4.5% differential of the average per gallon cost of fuel used in the calculation of the current FAC rate.

CUC first instituted the Levelized Energy Adjustment Clause in 2009 to recover fuel and fuel related costs, a system also used by power providers in Guam and the Virgin Islands. In May 2015, the CPUC authorized CUC to change the name of LEAC to FAC to provide customers a more accurate description of the electric rate. ***(CUC)***

OAG

From Page 1

sulted in a devastating rise in opioid abuse, dependence, addiction, and overdose deaths in the CNMI."

According to the complaint filed by assistant attorney general Hunter Hunt with the Superior Court, the OAG is suing Johnson & Johnson's Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc., Ortho-McNeil-Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc., and Janssen Pharmaceutica, Inc. on behalf of the CNMI pursuant to the Consumer Protection Act, Unfair Business Practices Act, and the common law of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Hunt stated that Johnson & Johnson is one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in the world and through its company, Janssen, defendants have manufactured, marketed, and sold five branded opioid products: Duragesic, Nucynta, Nucynta ER, Ultram, and Ultram ER. These opioid products allegedly kills hundreds of people every year, including in the CNMI, while thousands more are suffering from negative health consequences short of death.

"The rise in opioid prescriptions caused…a devastating rise in opioid abuse, dependence, addiction, and overdose deaths in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Every community in the Commonwealth suffers from the opioid crisis of addiction and death. countless others have had their lives ruined by a friend or family member's addiction or death," the lawsuit stated.

Because of this, the OAG wants the Superior court to issue a permanent injunction prohibiting the defendants, their officers, agents, servants, employees, attorneys—and any other person in active concert or participation with any or all defendants—from engaging in deceptive acts and practices in violation of Consumer Protection Act.

Also, the OAG wants the court to order the defendants to pay compensatory restitution as set forth in the Consumer Protection Act, abate the public nuisance by paying compensatory restitution, and to pay plaintiffs' attorneys' fees and costs of court, as provided under the Consumer Protection Act.

According to the lawsuit, in promoting its branded opioid products, Janssen minimized or omitted discussion with doctors of the risk of addiction and misrepresented the potential for abuse of its opioid prescription drugs with purportedly abuse-deterrent formulations.

"Janssen failed to disclose ceiling doses when taking prescription opioids, misrepresented that the risk of addiction is low in older persons, misrepresented that the risk of addiction from taking prescription opioids is a myth, and minimized rate and risk of withdrawal from taking prescription opioids," the lawyer stated.

The OAG's first cause of action in pursuing a lawsuit against the large pharmaceutical company is violations of the Consumer Protection Act and Unfair Business Practices Act.

The defendants allegedly misrepresented the risks and benefits their opioid products and opioids generally in the CNMI.

"Defendants, in the conduct of commerce, engaged in unfair or deceptive acts or practices in violation of the Consumer Protection Act and Unfair Business Practices Act," Hunt stated.

The CNMI's second cause of action was Public Nuisance pursuant to CNMI law.

Hunt said the defendants allegedly created a public nuisance by unreasonably interfering with rights common to the public as prohibited by the common law of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

LAWMAKERS

From Page 1

terday's House session was Senate Joint Resolution 22-09 that the Senate had earlier passed to make way for the government retirees' bonuses. Authored by Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) and five other Republican senators, the Senate joint resolution also approved Torres' request to reprogram $2.6 million from within the Executive Branch for the payment of the bonuses.

The House, however, chose not to act yesterday on Senate Joint Resolution 22-09 and, instead, passed House Bill 22-95.

During discussions yesterday, San Nicolas said he supports giving the retirees' bonus and the Senate's method of making it happen as it will enable Torres to process the retirees' bonuses immediately.

He said it is clear that both the House and Senate support giving the retirees their bonus but the issue is the method where both parties can agree on and which is the fastest method since the retirees have been waiting for over three months.

He said the House's approach is through an appropriation that reallocates Hotel Occupancy Tax funds but, as stated by Tinian and Aguiguan Mayor Edwin P. Aldan, this will have a devastating effect on the municipality of Tinian and their tourist industry.

"Therefore, I cannot support the appropriation given that there is a better and faster alternative," the lawmaker said.

He noted that an appropriation bill will also require the approval of the House, Senate, and governor. "This will definitely be the longer method," San Nicolas said.

He pointed out that the Senate resolution had been reviewed and recommended by the Settlement Fund trustee, Attorney General Edward Manibusan, and Senate legal counsel Antonette Villagomez, as stated by Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig.

San Nicolas said it is also the fastest method because, once the House approves the Senate resolution, the governor will be able to release the funds at once.

He said the House majority members claim the Senate resolution is insufficient as funds cannot be reprogrammed to an unfunded account. But, according to the Planning and Budgeting Act and all the legal reviews, San Nicolas said, this authority is given through a joint resolution.

Therefore, he said, when the House approves the Senate resolution, both legislative chambers give Torres the authority to create a new business unit for the retirees' bonus and the authority to reprogram funds into the account to pay the bonuses. He said this has been thoroughly vetted by the AG as legally sufficient.

Rep. John Paul Sablan (R-Saipan), who was appointed floor leader pro temp in the absence of floor leader Ralph N. Yumul (R-Saipan), moved for the passage of House Bill 22-95.

Last Feb. 22, the House rejected Senate Joint Resolution 22-91, HD1, SS1, which is the Senate's other version of a bill that gives a $1,000 bonus for government retirees. All 20 representatives agreed to the creation of a conference committee that will hammer out with the Senate a mutually acceptable bill for retirees' bonuses.

Democrat representatives opposed language in the Senate's version that will give Torres' 100% reprogramming authority of the budget.

Rep. Lee Pan Guerrero (R-Saoipan) warned yesterday that House Bill 22-95 is going to be rejected again by the Senate, so he highly recommends that they refer this bill to the House's Ways and Means Committee.

Guerrero said both counsels of the House and Senate need to discuss and come up with a solution.

"I think if both counsels [of the] Senate and House sit and address any concern, maybe this is the way to get this thing resolved. Because if we vote again and it gets rejected at the Senate, we are not moving forward," Guerrero said.

The lawmaker said they should use their respective lawyers to mediate and come to an understanding on how quickly they can give this $1,000 bonus to the retirees.

"If we put this to a vote, I will vote no because it's not [going to] solve the problem," Guerrero said.

Rep. Donald Manglona (Ind-Rota), who is the main author of House Bill 22-95, said this bill is very similar to Senate Joint Resolution 22-91 and that the only contention they had with the Senate was the governor's 100% reprogramming authority which the Senate took out in the Senate Joint Resolution 22-09.

He said this was the amendment to the 22-91 to address the 100% reprogramming authority. "That was the main difference between [Senate Joint Resolution] 91 and [House Bill] 95," Manglona said.

He said even if they were to send this bill to the House and Ways Committee and have the lawyers communicate with each other, they might get the same action with the counsels.

Manglona also questioned they let the counsels do it when they (House members) are open to meeting with the Senate and their conferees.

"If the Senate does not want to meet with the House conferees for whatever reason, our hope is that 22-95 and the appropriation and account that we created through 22-95 would be something that the Senate can agree on and vote to pass it," he said.

San Nicolas questioned why the House did not initiate the filing of legislation for the retirees' bonus considering they are the appropriating authority. "Why did we have to wait for the Senate?" asked San Nicolas, adding that they've been waiting for three months for this bonus to be disbursed.

He said one his constituents on Tinian has already passed away while waiting for his $500 bonus.

"When are we going to disburse this? When are we [going to] give our retirees?" San Nicolas said.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

NMC-CREES program leaders complete Selective Leadership

Three program leaders from the Northern Marianas College's Cooperative Research, Extension, and Education Services recently completed a leadership program with other applicants across the land-grant university system for a seat in the recent cohort.

The program, called "Leadership Development for the 21st Century: Linking Research, Academics, and Extension," or LEAD21, is designed to develop leaders in land grant institutions and their strategic partners who link research, academics, and extension in order to lead more effectively in an increasingly complex environment.

The three CREES leaders who completed the program are Mike Ogo of the Aquaculture and Natural Resources program; Tayna Belyeu-Camacho of the Family, Community, and Youth Development program; and Dr. Virendra Verma of the Agriculture Production program.

"Mike, Tayna, and Verma have many notable career accomplishments thus far," said interim dean of CREES Patricia Coleman. "In addition to these accomplishments, they continue to remain committed to building their capacity as leaders as they have demonstrated through the completion of LEAD21."

The LEAD21 program consists of a one-year core curriculum that includes three sessions and a concurrent individual learning component. Ogo, Belyeu-Camacho, and Verma started the program in February of 2021.

Verma, who is the lead agriculture scientist at NMC-CREES, said that LEAD21 was an excellent professional development leadership course that enhanced their capacity to lead a cohesive team. "It provided opportunities for collaborative engagement with the diverse leaders from various disciplines and developed leadership skills through diversity of perspectives. The course also invited self-reflections to enhance critical understandings of personal and professional skills that are crucial for effective leadership." Verma said.

NMC

From left, Mike Ogo of the Aquaculture and Natural Resources program; Tayna Belyeu-Camacho of the Family, Community, and Youth Development program; and Dr. Virendra Verma of the Agriculture Production program—all program leaders at the Northern Marianas College's Cooperative Research, Extension, and Education Services—recently completed the Leadership Development for the 21st Century: Linking Research, Academics, and Extension program.

"Throughout my yearlong journey in the program, I was able to play an active role in my leadership development while engaging with other professionals within the Land Grant Universities," Belyeu-Camacho said. "With the guidance of my mentors, facilitators and peer group, I was able to put theory into practice by developing and implementing my personal development plan."

"The comprehensiveness of the leadership development program along with my peer group enabled me to challenge myself by stepping out of my comfort zone. It was a phenomenal experience and a worthwhile investment of my time and effort. I am truly grateful to [Coleman], the LEAD21 team, and LEAD21 Class 17, especially my peer group Y4, for their encouragement, guidance and overall support in helping me grow in my leadership abilities," Camacho added.

Ogo sees a complete change in himself for the better as far as working with his colleagues, students, and the community that NMC-CREES serves. "The training, through their self-assessment program, allowed me to understand myself as far as where my strengths and weaknesses are as a leader and how to improve on them," Ogo said. "The training also provided many tools at my disposal to be an effective leader at our organizations; tools such as 'Design Thinking,' which encourages leaders to use processes to design programs or products based on a clear understanding of the needs and wants of the stakeholders or tools like 'Leadership Dilemma,' where it teaches leaders how to handle and resolve issues within the organization to eliminate potential threats and encourage teamwork."

Their participation in LEAD21 allowed them to network with other leaders within the land grant system that will enable them to develop relationships that will be mutually beneficial for their institutions.

NMC president Galvin Deleon Guerrero, EdD also expressed his congratulations to the three leaders for their hard work and dedication to the program. ***(NMC)***

Taste of the Marianas date change

The Marianas Visitors Authority has changed one date of the 23rd Annual Taste of the Marianas International Food Festival & Beer Garden in June 2022 on the island of Saipan.

This year's festival will be held from 5pm to 10pm on June 18, 19, 24, 25, and 26, at Garapan Fishing Base. The Taste of the Marianas is organized by the Marianas Visitors Authority and will feature two weekends of some of the destination's best cuisine and entertainment. The event dates also coincide with the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022, which is expected to attract nearly 2,000 athletes and officials.

"To best coordinate with the events schedule of Pacific Mini Games, we will also hold the festival on Friday, June 24," said MVA managing director Priscilla M. Iakopo. "We hope all our visitors will have the opportunity join us and enjoy this taste of the Marianas."

The annual signature event of the MVA will feature affordable dishes from local eateries, live entertainment, and arts and crafts sales. The venue, vendor registration information, and other details will be announced once confirmed.

For more information, contact MVA Community Projects specialist Ray Villagomez at rvillagomez@mymarians.com or 664-3200.

The MVA will also host Saipan Marathon on April 9, 2022. ***(PR)***

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950 • PHONE: (670) 237-6500 • FAX: (670) 234-5962
WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT GROUNDS MAINTENANCE SERVICES AIR-SIDE

PROJECT NO. CPA-RFP-004-22

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is soliciting sealed proposals for grounds maintenance services of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport on the Island of Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Proposal Package will be available at the Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, 2nd Floor of the Arrival Building beginning March 18, 2022.

All proposals shall be sealed and marked on the cover package outside as follows: "Proposal for Grounds Maintenance Services (Air-Side) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport) Project No-CPA-RFP-004-22". One original and two (2) copies of the proposal must be submitted no later than 2:00 P.M. LOCAL TIME, APRIL 18, 2022, to the Office of the Executive Director at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. Proposals received after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstances.

There will be no Pre-Proposal Conference but proposers will be allowed to do Site Visits by calling CPA Deputy Executive Director, Ed Mendiola at telephone numbers 237-6505 during working hours.

Written questions and/or clarifications regarding this project will be entertained up till April 11, 2022.

CPA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted for: (a) any of the reasons set forth in this RFP; or (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding proposal rejection or cancellation; or (c) sufficient justification exists that awarding this project contract would not be in the best interest of CPA, CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said proposals if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest.

All proposals shall become the property of CPA.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director
March 14, 2022

EUCON INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

JOB OPENING:
SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER

Job Duties:
Provides instruction at the Secondary School level in the following classes: Fundamental Math, Algebra I and Geometry; creates lesson plans; evaluates student performance and provides feedback; communicates students' progress to parents; develops and updates curriculum for the classroom; maintains accurate records of students' progress; keeps order in the classroom; posts grades and sends grade reports to parents; performs other teaching-related duties.

Other requirements:
Baccalaureate degree in liberal arts, stem-science, or engineering; ability to communicate and interact with students and parents; ability to encourage and motivate students; basic computer and microsoft software skills; Chinese language skills preferred, as school instructs both native English and Chinese speaking students

Work Location: Eucon International School, Kulales Place, Chalan Pale Arnold Road, Gualo Rai Mail Address: P.O. Box 500087, Saipan, MP 98950

E-Mail address: hr@eucon.edu

EUCON INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

JOB OPENING:
ACCOUNTING CLERK

Duties:
The Accounting Clerk, receiving general guidance from the school's Finance Manager, performs general bookkeeping duties, including checking, computation, classifying and recording data to keep financial records; establishes and maintains chart of accounts and subsidiary accounts, allocating, and posting transactions; performs other bookkeeping and accounting assistance tasks.

Other requirements:
Must have a high school diploma/GED with at least 12 months of progressive work experience in the accounting clerk field with basic accounting and clerical skills and knowledge. Skill in Microsoft and QuickBooks software, math and English, and operating computer.

Work Location: Eucon International School, Kulales Place, Chalan Pale Arnold Road, Gualo Rai Mail Address: P.O. Box 500087, Saipan, MP 98950

E-Mail address: hr@eucon.edu

Man accused of CW-1 visa fraud is found guilty after jury trial

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The jury trial for a man accused of defrauding U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services through the CNMI-Only Transitional Worker, or CW-1, visa scheme has ended with a unanimous guilty verdict.

Jurors in the trial of Halim Khan unanimously found Khan guilty on Monday of conspiracy to defraud the United States.

At his trial, Khan was represented by attorneys Bruce Berline and Joey San Nicolas while Rippon Ahmed served as the defendant's interpreter.

In her order setting sentencing, U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona Manglona referred Khan to the U.S. Probation Office before setting his sentencing on Aug. 5, at 9am.

Khan was allowed to wait out his sentencing under the court's previous release conditions.

According to court documents, Khan is one of three other charged with one count of conspiracy to defraud the United States. Khan's co-conspirators are Servillana Soriano, Aminul Islam, and Faroque Hosen, all of RES International LLC.

The second superseding indictment filed in 2020 states that Soriano, along with Khan, Islam, and Hosen, agreed to defraud the United States by deceitful and dishonest means, for the purpose of impeding, impairing, obstructing, and defeating the lawful government functions of a government agency, USCIS, in the fair and objective evaluation of applications for CW-1 non-immigrant visas.

It was part of the conspiracy that RES International LLC would, in exchange for money, submit a petition for CW-1 classification that would falsely and fraudulently represent that an employer-employee relationship exists between RES and the beneficiaries under the employment terms set forth in the petition, the indictment stated.

Islam and Hosen have both pleaded guilty to the charge.

Islam was sentenced to serve one week of imprisonment and one year of supervised release last Feb 16, and was also ordered to serve 25 hours of community service, and to pay a $100 assessment fee.

Hosen's sentencing has been moved to April 4, at 1:30pm.

As for Soriano, a jury found her guilty back in 2021 and she now awaits her sentencing, which is scheduled for May 3, at 9am.

NOAA research and mapping mission underway to Marianas

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's ship *Rainier* has departed Honolulu, Hawaii, for a major research and mapping campaign in the Marianas. After a two-year delay due to COVID-19, the ship is expected to arrive in Guam in early April and plan to be in the region until August to execute several important projects.

The official title of this research expedition is RICHARD (*Rainier* Integrates Charting, Hydrography, and Reef Demographics) to honor the late Rear Adm. Richard Brennan, who was the visionary and biggest champion of this collaborative, multi-disciplinary effort designed to meet a suite of science needs in the region.

Onboard, a team of scientists from across NOAA will simultaneously conduct dive-intensive National Coral Reef Monitoring Program long-term coral reef surveys aboard two small boats, and high-resolution seafloor mapping surveys using both the *Rainier* and two hydrographic survey launches.

The primary goal of NCRMP is to maintain a long-term time series to report status and trends of U.S. coral reef ecosystems and drivers of ecosystem change. Other important goals of NCRMP are to deliver high-quality data, data products, and tools to the coral reef conservation community, provide context for interpreting results of localized monitoring, and maintain strong partnerships with federal, state/territory, and academic partners.

The high-resolution seafloor mapping surveys will produce bathymetric and acoustic backscatter data to support NOAA's nautical charting products, improve maritime safety, and characterize seabed habitat in areas of the Marianas Archipelago that, in some cases, have not been surveyed in over 80 years, if at all. These data will be integrated with newly acquired topographic-bathymetric lidar data, to create a seamless map linking terrestrial, nearshore, and offshore areas.

The Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center's Life History Program will join this cross-NOAA expedition for the final leg to conduct important life history research in this region, if time permits. These surveys supplement ongoing bottomfish market sampling efforts in Guam and Saipan by collecting additional biological samples, such as otoliths, gonads, and tissue samples from multiple locations through the Marianas Archipelago. These data directly inform fisheries stock assessments and hence sustainable fisheries management.

"In previous years, we have invited local partners onboard when operating in the region to promote collaboration and information sharing. Unfortunately, due to the extensive scientific and operational capacity required to conduct these multiple research projects simultaneously, the *Rainier* is already staffed at full capacity throughout the expedition. Although we may experience delays due to COVID-19 or other unforeseen maintenance issues, we are optimistic that the mission will be successful," stated an email sent to *Saipan Tribune* yesterday from Michael P. Seki, Ph.D. director of the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center in Hawaii.

"We are looking forward to arriving in the Marianas to conduct this important work, and to collaborate with communities and resource managers in Guam and the CNMI to share our mission outcomes," added the email message that was also signed by Jennifer Koss, director, Coral Reef Conservation Program; and Rear Adm. Benjamin Evans, NOAA, director, Office of Coast Survey. ***(PR)***

Tinian students adopt and improve school curbs

The Governor's Council of Economic Advisers announced yesterday the completion of another successful community transformation by Tinian Elementary School's Student Government Organization and the TES Youth Advisory Panel. With the supervision of three TES staff, the students rehabilitated and repainted the school's curbs through GCEA's Adopt-A-Median program to improve visibility and enhance safety on their campus.

Monica Sanchez, the TES teacher who supervised the students, said the project provided an opportunity for students in the 4th through 6th grade to work together and complete the task as a team-building effort.

"The students showed that they were proud to be a part of the project, and it was an honor for them to assist in making our school beautiful through visible curbs and safety for everyone. The students had fun helping each other even though it was hot," said Sanchez. She said the students collectively agreed that they all learned to work together. "The students were team players by being active, respectful with one another, coming on time for the days scheduled to paint the median, and were committed until the completion of the project."

By sharing their experience, Sanchez noted that the SGO and YAP students hope to encourage others to adopt curbs and sidewalks around their schools and participate in other upcoming programs.

GCEA thanks the TES SGO and YAP students and teachers for volunteering their time to give back to their community. As a result, all TES students will enjoy a safer, more visible pick-up and drop-off experience. GCEA welcomes more schools to join the Adopt-A-Median program and take active roles in improving the safety of students in and around their campuses.

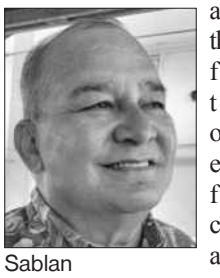
Photos of the project can be found on GCEA's Facebook page (@cnmieconomy) and GCEA's at cnmieconomy.com. For more information or to sign up for the Adopt-A-Median program and the Marianas Village Pride Campaign, visit cnmieconomy.com or contact the council at gceacnmi@gmail.com. All GCEA Public Private Partnership projects are made possible by the support of the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan's public benefit fund with the Department of Public Lands. ***(PR)***

GCEA

Tinian Elementary School students and staff rehabilitate and repaint the schools' curbs last March 7-9 as part of the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers' Marianas Village Pride Campaign's Adopt-A-Median program.

Financial aid info session on March 31

The district office of Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) will host a virtual College and Careers Info Session for students and parents on Thursday, March 31, 2022, at 3:45pm via Zoom. Participants can learn about the different types of federal financial aid available, get tips on navigating FAFSA, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, and ask questions of representatives from the U.S. Department of Education.



Sablan

"Education is my top priority in Congress, and finding ways to make college more accessible and more affordable for Marianas students is a big part of that," Sablan said, "This info session is an opportunity for students and their parents to learn about how federal financial aid can help them pay for college—and how to get started on applying for federal aid."

Thursday's session will feature an expert from the U.S. Department of Education. The presentation will be one hour long and cover the different federal student aid programs, tips for pre-college planning, navigating the FAFSA form, and online tools and resources from the Federal Student Aid Office.

Registration is required to access the meeting link. To register, visit Sablan's website at sablan.house.gov or call the Saipan District Office at 670-323-2647/8. ***(PR)***

Solomons PM says no regional risk in security deal with China

CANBERRA, Australia (AP)—Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare on Tuesday rejected concerns that regional safety would be jeopardized by a security treaty between the South Pacific island nation and China.

The United States, Australia and New Zealand are among the nations that have voiced concerns over a leaked draft of the bilateral agreement.

Sogavare told his national parliament that negotiations had concluded but the treaty had not yet been signed.

"We are sensitive to the unfortunate perception held by many leaders that the region's security is threatened by the presence of China in the region," Australian Broadcasting Corp. reported him telling parliament.

"This is utter nonsense," he added. "I find it very insulting...to be branded as unfit to manage our sovereign affairs."

A document leaked last week indicates that China could boost its military presence in the Solomons, including with visits by warships.

Sogavare said the leaked document was a draft. He would not reveal details of the final document.

The U.S. State Department expressed concern, saying it did not believe China's security forces and methods needed to be exported.

The Australian and New Zealand prime ministers on Monday voiced concerns about the potential for a Chinese military presence on the Solomons.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison spoke to New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and his counterparts in Papua New Guinea and Fiji about the potential deal.

"The reports that we've seen are not a surprise to us and are a reminder of the constant pressure and threats that present in our region to our own national security," Morrison said.

"This is an issue of concern for the region but it has not come as a surprise. We have been long aware of these pressures," he added.

Ardern described the possibility of Chinese military forces stationed on the Solomons as "gravely concerning."

"We see such acts as the potential militarization of the region," she said. "We see very little reason in terms of the Pacific security for such a need and such a presence," she added.

Ardern urged Solomons' leaders "not to look beyond our own Pacific family" when considering the country's security relationships.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin dismissed those concerns, saying: "The cooperation between China and the Solomon Islands has been warmly welcomed by the Solomon government and people."

"No attempt to disrupt and undermine the mutually beneficial cooperation between China and the Pacific Island countries will succeed," Wang told reporters at a daily briefing Monday.

Under the terms of the draft agreement, China could send police, military personnel and other armed forces to the Solomons "to assist in maintaining social order" and for a variety of other reasons. It could also send ships to the islands for stopovers and to replenish supplies.

The draft agreement stipulates that China would need to sign off on any information that's released about joint security arrangements, including at media briefings.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 22-057

Opening Date: March 17, 2022
Closing Date: March 31, 2022

POSITION TITLE:	**Trades Technician: Mechanic**
DEPARTMENT:	**Power Generation Division**
LOCATION:	**Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA**
ANNUAL SALARY:	**$22,193.60 to $28,115.00 per annum, Non-Exempt**
CONTRACT:	**Not Contracted**
POSITION(S):	**One (1)**

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Power Generation Manager or his/her designee. This class specification represents only the core areas of responsibilities; specific position assignments will vary depending on the needs of the Power Generation Division.

Duties:

- Performs maintenance, operations, installations and/or repairs in assigned area of responsibility;
- Provides technical guidance regarding assigned functions; and ensures quality service levels in accordance with proper procedures;
- Provide assistance in monitoring and complying with regulatory compliance; operates specialized and heavy equipment; performs maintenance activities and skilled repairs to equipment, infrastructure and/or other items of assigned area of responsibility;
- Identifies issues and operational concerns;
- Performs analysis, maintenance, operations, installations and/or repairs of 8 megawatt, 13 megawatt Mitsubishi-MAN diesel engines to include engine auxiliary equipment in the main Power Plant and provide the same services on the small Power Plant with 2.5 megawatt Electromotive Division (EMD) units.
- Ensures work is within Original Equipment Manufacturing (OEM) engineering specifications and quality levels.
- Performs inspections; provides troubleshooting; evaluates corrective measures or options; recommends and implements solutions and corrective actions;
- Receives trouble calls; responds to requests and provides information or status updates.
- Initiates requests for the replenishment of materials and supplies; cleans, organizes and maintains work and supply areas;
- Analyzes readings of equipment; maintains records, logs, orders, data, and prepares reports;
- Perform reconditioning of used parts;
- Perform alignment of pumps and motors at auxiliary sites; Bending, cutting, grinding and fabricating various types of materials;
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: High School Diploma, General Education Diploma, or Adult Basic Education. Graduate from a Vocational/Technical Institution as a Mechanic or related field. Must demonstrate having had (A) 4 years of increasingly responsible experience performing mechanic duties on 1500 HP or larger diesel prime mover engines and associated auxiliary units. Experience on Mitsubishi MAN, EMD, Cummins and/or Nordberg diesel engines desired but not required.
Knowledge of: Mechanical principles, practices and procedures of assigned service area; Mathematical concepts; Inspection procedures; Safety procedures and safe work practices;
Skills in: Performing skilled maintenance, operations and repair work of various plant systems; Operating specialized and heavy equipment; Monitoring equipment and making adjustments; Performing inspections and identifying issues; Troubleshooting issues and recommending or implementing solutions; Receiving requests and trouble calls and providing assistance; Initiating supply requests; Taking equipment readings and maintaining historical data; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Work closely with others and/or alone depending on assigned daily activities.

- **Physical Demands:**
  - o Able to lift and carry heavy objects of 45 pounds and over, climb ladders, reach above the shoulders, stand, sit, crawl and kneel for prolonged periods and perform repeated bending.
  - o Recognize color codes, operate cranes and motor vehicles.
  - o Work primarily inside around machinery in operation; in varying degree of temperature in tight or cramped (confined) work spaces, at heights, on ladders or scaffolds, and on slippery or uneven walking surfaces in close proximity to high and low voltage circuits and climbs stairs frequently. o Occasionally use solvents, de-greasing agents, or other chemical agents, and be assigned to protracted or irregular hours of work; exposed to dust, oil, grease, constant or excessive noise, vibration, and smoke and gas fumes.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday and Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

P. O. Box 501220, Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Fax: (670) 235-5131
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Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 22-054

Opening Date: March 18, 2022
Closing Date: April 1, 2022

POSITION TITLE:	**Trades Technician-Operator**
DEPARTMENT:	**Power Generation**
LOCATION:	**Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA**
ANNUAL SALARY:	**$20,826.00to $28,115.00 per annum, Non-Exempt**
CONTRACT:	**Not Contracted**
POSITION(S):	**One (1)**

The incumbent will be under the overall supervision of the Power Generation Manager or his/her designee. This class specification represents only the core areas of responsibilities; specific position assignments will vary depending on the needs of the Power Generation Division.

Duties:

- Responsible for the safe and efficient operation of all plant equipment and machinery including, but not limited to, generators, operation of valves, plant production operations, and unloading of diesel fuel tank trunks to storage tanks.
- Follows all safety and operations procedures during operations and maintenance activities.
- Responsible for monitoring of all Plant systems as assigned.
- Will act as the responsible person when working without supervision. Responsible for entire plant during operating periods.
- May direct and/or instruct all other personnel as required during all other periods.
- May be on call for emergency response.
- Operates, controls, monitors and inspects generators, switchgears, motor controls, transformers, protection relays, circuit breakers, compressors, RO system and other associated equipment.
- Performs analysis, maintenance, operations, installations and/or repairs of 8 megawatt, 13 megawatt Mitsubishi-MAN diesel engines to include engine auxiliary equipment in the main Power Plant and provide the same services on the small Power Plant with 2.5 megawatt
- Electromotive Division (EMD) units.
- Ensures work is within Original Equipment Manufacturing (OEM) engineering specifications and quality levels.
- Takes readings from meters, gauges and computers at established intervals, reads and interprets data to take corrective steps as necessary.
- Inspects records and log book entries, and communicates with other plant personnel in order to assess equipment-operating status.
- Performs systems operations to regulate and coordinate transmission load, frequencies and line voltages. Identifies potential issues and operational concerns; performs operational inspections and symptomatic maintenance; provides status reports; evaluates and implements solutions and corrective actions under emergency situations.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: High School Diploma, General Education Diploma, or Adult Basic Education. Considerable knowledge in operation, repair, and maintenance of power generating and/or industrial equipment/facilities. Must demonstrate having had (A) Four (4) years of increasingly responsible experience in a diesel engine power plant operations and (B) those four years of increasingly responsible experience are to be performing operator duties.
Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Mechanical and electrical principles, practices and operations of power plant equipment. Customer service principles; Mathematical concepts; Inventory maintenance practices; Taking equipment readings and maintaining reading data; Inspection procedures; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology.
Skills in: Performing inspections and analyzing system and equipment data; Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standard operating procedures; Monitoring plant equipment and making adjustments; Identifying electrical and mechanical issues and recommending or implementing solutions; Initiating requests and trouble calls and providing assistance; Preparing and updating activity logs and status reports; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Able to lift and carry heavy objects of 45 pounds and over, climb ladders, reach above the shoulders, stand, sit, crawl and kneel for prolonged periods and perform repeated bending. Recognize color codes, operate cranes and motor vehicles. Occasionally use solvents, de-greasing agents, or other chemical agents, and be assigned to protracted or irregular hours of work; exposed to dust, oil, grease, constant or excessive noise, vibration, and smoke and gas fumes. Work closely with others and/or alone depending on assigned daily activities.

Must be available to work 24/7 rotation shift to include weekends, holidays, and on-call. All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

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Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 22-056

Opening Date: March 17, 2022
Closing Date: March 31, 2022

POSITION TITLE:	**Trades Technician, Senior**
DEPARTMENT:	**Water Division**
LOCATION:	**Rota, Northern Marianas Islands, USA**
ANNUAL SALARY:	**$24,096.00 to $32,529.00 per annum, Non- Exempt**
CONTRACT:	**Not Contracted**
POSITION(S):	**One (1)**

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Drinking Water & Wastewater Division Manager or his/her designee. This class specification represents only the core areas of responsibilities; specific position assignments will vary depending on the needs of the department. The Trades Technician Senior may serve as a crew leader to include assigning and monitoring work and providing technical direction.

Duties:

- Prepares training information and materials for an assigned technical training program for trades staff.
- Performs skilled/certified level operations, in-field installations and/or repairs in assigned service areas.
- Inspects equipment and determines if any repairs are needed.
- Performs preventative maintenance in assigned service areas.
- Assists with maintaining sufficient level of supplies and equipment.
- Generally, is responsible for: Maintaining operating reservoirs and distribution valves; monitoring reservoir level and water pressure levels;
- Maintaining water wells, booster stations and reservoir stations;
- Responding to customer complaints;
- May serve in lead role installing, maintaining and repairing water lines;
- Monitoring chlorine gas in the water system;
- Maintaining and repairing motors, pumps and other related equipment;
- Gathering water samples;
- Installing and/or replacing water meters;
- Performing disconnects and reconnects;
- Bleeding fire hydrants;
- Preparing daily progress reports.
- Assures all materials and field activities are in accordance with all applicable standards, codes, specifications and regulations.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature or level, as required.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: High School Diploma or General Education Diploma or Adult Basic Education (ABE) Program Adult School Diploma (AS), Level 2 certification for water distribution, and 3 years of skilled experience related to area of assignment.
Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology.
Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Performing skilled maintenance, operations and repair work in assigned area; Reviewing quality levels and providing technical guidance in assigned area; Operating specialized and heavy equipment; Monitoring equipment and making adjustments; Performing inspections and identifying issues; Troubleshooting issues and recommending or implementing solutions; Receiving requests and trouble calls and providing assistance; Monitoring inventory and supplies; Initiating supply requests; Taking equipment readings and maintaining reading data; Preparing and updating activity logs and status reports; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

Licensing/Certification:

- Valid U.S. Driver's License with appropriate class;
- Trades Licenses and/or Certifications, based on assignment;
- Water/Wastewater Treatment and Distribution Certifications, based on assignment.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

Get a booster if you haven't already

This deep into the COVID-19 pandemic, it's clear that what happens in Europe tends not to stay in Europe.

Rising infections there often serve as an advance warning of another COVID-19 surge in the United States. Unfortunately, the still-evolving virus is once again spreading on the other side of the Atlantic, with sharp case increases reported in Germany, France, Italy and Great Britain.

Pandemic fatigue is no excuse not to prepare for rising cases here. One of the most important steps to take is getting a COVID-19 booster if you haven't already. The number of people who haven't yet done so is alarming.

It's critical to get a booster before another surge happens. Doing so protects your health and will help prevent another wave of hospitalizations from overwhelming an already exhausted health care workforce.

The booster is generally recommended for those ages 12 and up who completed the primary two-shot Pfizer series. It's also recommended for adults ages 18 and older who have already received two shots of the Moderna vaccination or one shot of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

About 29% of the U.S. population has received a COVID-19 booster, according to the New York Times COVID tracker. Minnesotans, thankfully, are doing better than the national average, data from the state Department of Health shows.

About 46% of the state's total population is considered "up to date" on COVID-19 vaccines, a definition that means they've received all doses (including boosters) recommended by health officials. Beating the national booster shot average by 17 percentage points is commendable. But clearly, that still leaves much room for improvement.

A deeper dive into state statistics offers more clarity on who still needs to step up for the shot. An impressive 82% of Minnesotans age 65 and older are considered "up to date" on COVID-19 vaccines. But that figure drops to 56% for those ages 50-64, with the decline continuing in younger groups.

Just 40% of Minnesotans ages 18-49 have all recommended COVID-19 shots. Only 31% of those ages 16 and 17 do. The number is even lower for those ages 12-15: 26%.

Context is important in considering these percentages. Mandated protections against COVID-19 have largely ebbed. Instead, there's a reliance on individuals to take responsibility—staying home if sick, for example, or masking voluntarily in areas where transmission is increasing.

Against this backdrop, vaccination remains vitally important. The shots remain one of medicine's most potent weapons against COVID-19, but their effectiveness can wane over time. Timely boosters counter that, even when new, more transmissible variants are circulating, as a new report from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) showed.

"In January 2022, unvaccinated adults and those vaccinated with a primary series, but no booster or additional

See BOOSTER on Next Page

DIST. BY KING FEATURES SYNDICATE/NAS
MIKE SMITH
LAS VEGAS SUN 2022
JUDGE THOMAS' WIFE WANTED THE ELECTION OVERTURNED. DOES THAT HURT THE COURT'S REPUTATION?
YES.

America, please show Russia you're the energy alpha now

By ARTHUR LAFFER and PATRICK GIORDANO
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Two recent events have been incredibly troublesome but have finally brought home the energy and climate crises that are plaguing the planet. Russia's unprovoked attack on Ukraine has exposed two follies: Europe's deep dependence on Russia for oil and natural gas and U.S. imports of Russian oil. Meanwhile, the United Nations' recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report has expertly documented the dramatic adverse impacts of climate change on people throughout the globe.

With bipartisan support, President Joe Biden announced a ban on U.S. imports of Russian energy. But he still continues to demonize North American fossil fuels.

After decades of dependence on foreign sources of energy, we achieved energy independence in 2019 and 2020 but have now lost this independence. Recently, Biden acknowledged that we must again achieve energy independence.

Biden should eliminate the moratorium on new oil and gas leases on federal lands. Additionally, the U.S. should approve the Keystone XL pipeline so we can significantly increase imports from friendly Canada and thereby limit imports from foreign actors such as Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela and Iran. These actions are necessary for national security.

The U.S. also must implement all policies necessary to dramatically increase liquefied natural gas exports to Europe. We must approve additional export terminals, as well as additional gas pipelines to transport natural gas for processing into its liquefied form. These measures will help expedite Europe's ability to eliminate its reliance on Russia for 40% of its natural gas.

The European Union and the newly installed German government, with the support of Germany's Green Party, have recently declared that they want to use much more liquefied natural gas and adopt policies to accomplish this. To totally eliminate Russian natural gas without wrecking their economies, however, European countries also should allow fracking.

It is undeniable that fracking of natural gas, coupled with deregulation of gas and electricity markets, has enabled the U.S. to keep natural gas and electricity prices very low in comparison to European prices. European natural gas prices have consistently been at least five times higher than U.S. natural gas prices for the past 12 months. These high prices have hammered European consumers and enabled Russia to fund its unconscionable war in Ukraine.

Fracking bans also have led to greater European carbon emissions because the high natural gas prices have stymied natural gas replacement of far dirtier coal in their electricity generating plants. In fact, many European power plants have recently switched from natural gas back to coal due to Europe's incredibly high natural gas prices. In contrast, the U.S. has substantially reduced carbon emissions by replacing coal with natural gas at more than 100 power plants. The burning of natural gas for electricity generation produces only half as many carbon emissions as coal burning.

At the same time the U.S. and Europe are taking all necessary actions to reestablish U.S. energy independence and eliminate European dependence on Russian energy, all reasonable steps to fight climate change also must be taken. These actions are not inconsistent and are both necessary for the economic and environmental health of the U.S., Europe and the world.

Significant strides against climate change are being made in the U.S. thanks to the bipartisan infrastructure law. For example, $65 billion is being spent to support enhancements of the electricity grid, which will allow transmission of electricity produced by renewable energy sources from where it can be produced most cost-effectively. The bipartisan infrastructure law also provides $7.5 billion to accelerate the build-out of a national network of electric vehicle charging stations, and $9.5 billion for green hydrogen initiatives using renewable energy for conversion of water into hydrogen.

As Sen. Joe Manchin, chair of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, recently said: "We must commit to once again achieving energy independence by embracing an all-of-the-above energy policy to ensure that the American people have reliable, dependable and affordable energy without disregarding our climate responsibilities."

The same approach to energy and climate policy must be used in Europe. As former world chess champion and Vladimir Putin critic Garry Kasparov succinctly stated in a recent Tribune op-ed: The U.S. should "replace Russian energy exports by increasing production and opening new sources, from fracking to nuclear to renewables. Giving authoritarians so much leverage for extortion is unacceptable. There's no point in saving the planet if you don't save the people on it."

Now that the Russian invasion of Ukraine has united Americans, Europeans and many others, let's quickly act together to save the people and the planet.

Arthur Laffer is chairman of Laffer Associates, an economics consulting firm. Patrick Giordano is managing director of Giordano & Associates, an energy law firm.

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Statement on leadership change at Democratic Party of the NMI

Editor's Note: The following is the statement of Rep. Christina Marie Sablan (D-Saipan) and Rep. Leila Fleming Staffler (D-Saipan) on the leadership transition of the NMI Democratic Party:

By CHRISTINA MARIE SABLAN and LEILA FLEMING STAFFLER
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Leila and I congratulate the newly elected interim officers of the Democratic Party of the Northern Marianas: Jonathan Cabrera, chair; Luella Marciano, vice chair; Shawna Indalecio, treasurer; and Melia Johnson, secretary—all long-time Democrats, faithful to the people of the Marianas and the values of the party. We thank them for stepping up to the plate to assume these positions of leadership in the party to support the election of Democrats up and down the ballot in this year's critical election. And we stand ready to support them as well in the transition process and as we prepare for the next general membership meeting.

We also extend our deepest appreciation to immediate past chair Nola Kileleman Hix, whose energetic and visionary leadership these past three years has been instrumental in the reorganization of the party, and the successful election of Democrats to the CNMI House and Senate for the first time in decades. Nola has led the party with incredible grace and at great personal sacrifice, and we thank her for agreeing to stay on as interim chair well past her initial term even after her relocation to Guam with her family, in order to assist with the recruitment of her phenomenal successor and the transition in leadership.

We owe a debt of gratitude as well to immediate past vice chair Danny Quitugua, past treasurer Evan Yamagishi, and past secretary Luella Marciano, for their devoted and dependable service to the Democratic Party, our candidates and volunteers, the people of the Marianas, and the movement for good governance. Ms. Hix, Mr. Quitugua, Mr. Yamagishi, and, of course, Ms. Marciano who now assumes a new officer position, will continue to be active members of the party, and we will continue to look to them for their wise advice and institutional knowledge, especially in the coming months as the 2022 election draws near.

Children with disabilities in private schools

By JEANNE RAYPHAND
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

As most of us know by now, under the Individuals with Disabilities Act, students with disabilities have the right to a free appropriate public education, or FAPE. The question is: Do students with disabilities have the same rights if they are enrolled in private schools?

Some children are placed in private schools by their parents who do not believe FAPE has been provided by their local school district, and some children are placed in private schools by their school district as a means of providing FAPE.

The U.S. Department of Education has just released a question-and-answer document to provide guidance for a third category of children: those children placed in private school by their families without first enrolling them in public school and for whom FAPE is not an issue.

In this third category of children, federal officials say that: *[w]hile IDEA provides no individual entitlement to children with disabilities whose parents have placed them in a private school when FAPE is not at issue, the law does require that an LEA spend a proportionate amount of its IDEA Part B funds to provide equitable services to this group of children, which could include direct and/or indirect services.*—Questions and Answers on Serving Children with Disabilities Placed by Their Parents in Private Schools, OSEP QA 22-01 (Revised February 2022).

This question-and-answer documents provides detailed information and legal references regarding students with disabilities in private schools as well as those children with disabilities who are being home-schooled, and responsibilities of the local school system in locating, identifying, and evaluating all children with disabilities and services required to be provided.

For more information, go to Policy Guidance: Individuals with Disabilities Act sites.ed.gov/idea/policy-guidance/ to obtain copy of the Questions and Answers on Serving Children With Disabilities Placed by Their Parents in Private Schools, OSEP QA 22-01 (Revised February 2022).

Jeanne Rayphand, Esq., is the legal counsel at the Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems Inc.

BOOSTER

From Page 8

dose, were 12 and three times as likely to be hospitalized, respectively, as were adults who received booster or additional doses," the March 18 report concluded.

For those who have already gotten a booster, thanks are in order as well as a reminder to be patient. Federal officials are considering whether an additional booster is warranted for some or all who've already taken this conscientious step.

Hopefully, the European surge won't translate to one in the United States. But there are no guarantees with a wily, still dangerous virus that has claimed close to 1 million American lives. If you've neglected getting a booster, now's the time to do so. It's the responsible thing to do.

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Faring poorly in Ukraine, Putin has little to lose by committing war crimes

By JOSEPH FELTER
Los Angeles Times

Joseph Felter, a former U.S. deputy assistant secretary of Defense and Army Special Forces officer, served in Iraq and Afghanistan. He is a Hoover Institution research fellow at Stanford University.

Vladimir Putin's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine last month and the deliberate targeting of civilians by Russia's military forces flagrantly violate both the laws of war that regulate a state's right to engage in war and the use of armed force as well as the rules that regulate the conduct of military forces once they are engaged in armed conflict.

Both Russia and Ukraine are signatories of the 1949 Geneva Conventions that set forth these principles. In the wake of the cataclysmic destruction of over 50 million civilians during World War II, the Geneva Conventions codified nearly a century of work on how to protect civilians, caregivers and the wounded during times of armed conflict. The convention, extended with three amendment protocols, has kept pace with armed conflict across the latter half of the 20th century.

Among the protocols, "Protection of the Civilian Population" describes types of indiscriminate attacks prohibited by the treaty, including "an attack which may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated." It further states "The civilian population ... shall not be the object of attack. Acts or threats of violence the primary purpose of which is to spread terror among the civilian population are prohibited."

Russian forces in Ukraine have violated these laws by directly targeting civilian infrastructure such as hospitals, apartment buildings, shopping centers and schools—and the U.S. State Department said Wednesday that Russian attacks in Ukraine have amounted to war crimes.

The Kremlin is employing siege tactics in population centers aimed at starving civilians into surrendering, taking them hostage or forcing them to expose themselves to risk as refugees. Cluster munitions and thermobaric "vacuum bombs" are being employed against civilian targets in direct violation of the Geneva Conventions. And Putin could take his violations of the laws of war to an even deadlier level should he employ chemical weapons as he did in Syria. Worse yet, some experts warn Putin may be tempted to deploy a tactical nuclear weapon in a desperate effort to force a settlement more favorable for Russia.

And with Russia's continued inability to advance on the ground in Ukraine, things are likely to get worse in its killing of noncombatants. Russian forces will increasingly target civilians and engage in war crimes under international law because its forces in Ukraine are too weak, poorly led and demoralized to effectively engage lawful military targets in a manner consistent with the laws of armed conflict. Instead, Putin's field commanders are likely to compensate for their military failings with wanton and indiscriminate use of long-range artillery, rockets and aerial bombardment.

And, unlike a conflict involving potential insurgencies, where cooperation from the local population is critical and there are strong incentives to avoid harming civilians, there are no hearts and minds possible for Putin to win in Ukraine and less perceived tactical costs to killing civilians.

Consider how Ukraine's valiant military, territorial defense forces and other resistance elements are refusing to cede cities and urban areas despite the indiscriminate artillery barrages, rocket attacks and siege tactics that the Russian invaders have resorted to in their desperate efforts to wrest control and occupy these towns.

Clearing urban areas is one of the most difficult and intensive missions that any military force can take on. It takes highly trained, disciplined and well-led soldiers at the small unit level to prevail in urban combat against an entrenched and determined foe. And even with such high-quality forces it is a slow, casualty-intensive, building-to-building, room-to-room slog. Witness the challenges American soldiers and Marines faced in nearly two months of fighting in the Second Battle of Fallujah in Iraq in late 2004.

With Russia's troops increasingly shown to be incapable of routing the Ukrainian forces in much of the country, especially when operating in urban areas, we can expect the Russian army to intensify its use of massive artillery barrages and the indiscriminate targeting of noncombatants similar to what it did during the second Chechen war. In late 1999, Putin ordered the total destruction of the capital, Grozny, which he ultimately achieved after nearly four months of brutal bombardment resulting in thousands of civilian deaths and the U.N. declaring it the most destroyed city on Earth.

Putin's playbook is quite open for everyone to see. It's not difficult to anticipate his next moves on the ground. Whether he can succeed in accomplishing his objectives in Ukraine—which are unclear at this point—in the face of determined resistance by Ukraine's people remains to be seen.

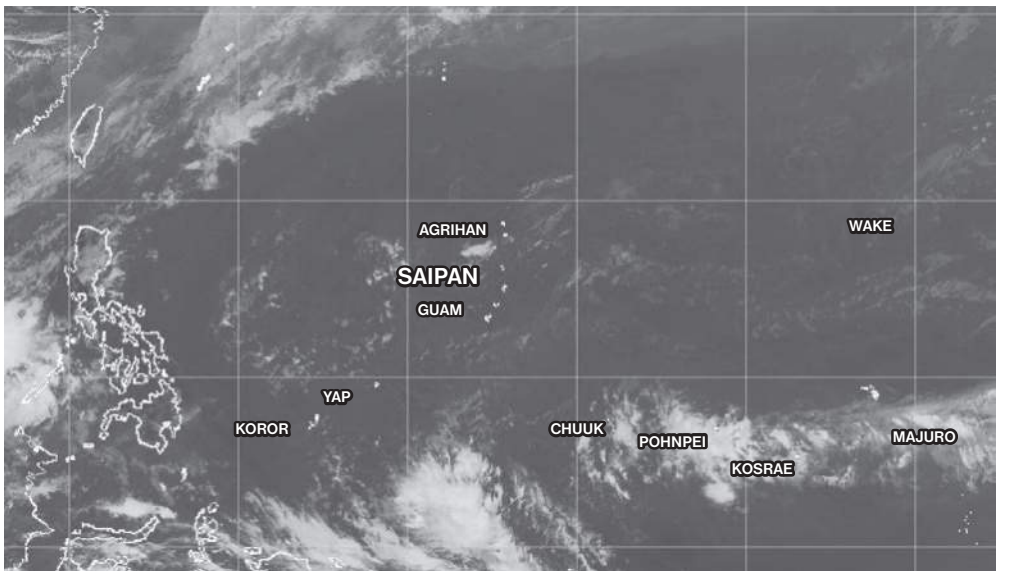
Regardless of the outcome of this war, Putin should be held criminally responsible for the atrocities committed by his military forces acting on his orders. For 70 years, the Geneva Conventions have stood to restrain the lethality of conflicts so that the brutality of World War II would never be repeated. These norms must be safeguarded, and the international community must use the tools at its disposal to make sure that Putin is held accountable for the blood he has spilled.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly sunny with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
86º 76º	85º 76	86º 78º	86º 77º	85º 77º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:29 AM, TUESDAY, MARCH 29, 2022

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite shows widely scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms moving through the Marianas Waters, with frequent showers and scattered thunderstorms north and west of the Saipan Waters. The Ipan and Ritidian buoys reveal seas of 8 to 10 feet with peak waves around 15 feet, composed mainly of east-northeast trade-wind swell and waves.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy/Wind	30 / 25 °F
Palau	PM Thunderstorms	29 / 25 °F
Yap	Scattered Thunderstorms	30 / 26 °F
Chuuk	AM Thunderstorms	29 / 27 °F
Pohnpei	Rain	28 / 25 °F
Kosrae	Cloudy	30 / 27 °F
Majuro	Thunderstorms	27 / 26 °F

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	06:14 AM	18:29 PM
Thursfay	06:13 AM	18:29 PM
Friday	-	-
Saturday	-	-
Sunday	-	-

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	04:50	16:46 PM	-
Thursfay	05:31	17:40 PM	-
Friday	-	-	-
Saturday	-	-	-
Sunday	-	-	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	24 / 17 °F
Beijing	AM Clouds/PM Sun	14 / 2 °F
Hong Kong	Partly Cloud	25 / 22 °F
Honolulu	Isolated Thunderstorms	28 / 22 °F
London	PM Light Rain	11 / 1 °F
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	20 / 13 °F
Manila	Partly Cloudy	35 / 27 °F
Melbourne	AM Clouds/PM Sun	28 / 18 °F
Miami	Mostly Sunny/Wind	26 / 23°F
New York	Cloudy	13 / 10 °F
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	19 / 9 °F
Paris	Cloudy	14 / 4 °F
Busan	Light Rain	14 / 7 °F
Rome	Rain	20 / 8 °F
Salem	Mostly Cloudy/Wind	29 / 16 °F
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	16 / 9 °F
Seoul	PM Showers	17 / 48°F
Tokyo	Mostly Cloudy	19 / 3 °F
Washington, DC	AM Clouds/PM Sun	17 / 12 °F

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY	FEET	
12:18 AM	Low Tide	-0.06
07:04 AM	High Tide	1.88
1:01 PM	Low Tide	0.79
6:21 PM	High Tide	1.82

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

■ Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.

■ Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.

■ Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.

■ Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.

■ Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.

■ Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html

■ Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

■ Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.

■ Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

■ Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:

• Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.

• Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

• Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

• Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 14, 2022

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	7:20am	8:05am	2, 4, 6
UA117	9:50am	10:35am	1, 3, 5, 7

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	6:30am	8:20am	1, 3, 5
UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	7:20am	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50am	9:50pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	Every 4 days (Jan 29-Mar 30)
TW9308	3:30PM	7:20PM	4, 7
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	3, 6

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

BX621	3:10PM	6:30PM	7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA116	5:30am	6:16am	2, 4, 6
UA116	8:00am	8:46am	7
UA174	8:00am	8:46am	1, 3, 5

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

PR110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	2, 4, 7
UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	2, 5
UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/116	10:40pm	6:16am+1	5 via Guam
UA184/174	10:40pm	8:46am+1	2 via Guam
UA184/116	10:55pm	6:16am+1	1, 3 via Guam
UA184/174	10:55pm	8:46am+1	4, 7 via Guam
UA184/116	10:55pm	8:46am+1	6 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	Every 4 days (Jan 29-Mar 30)
TW9307	9:00AM	Q2:30PM	4, 7
OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	3, 6

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

BX622	8:00AM	1:10PM	7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Daily
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

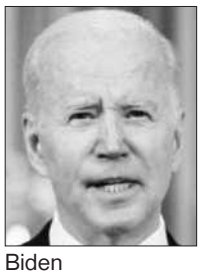
Biden budget plan: Higher taxes on rich, lower deficits

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden announced a budget blueprint Monday that calls for higher taxes on the wealthy, lower federal deficits, more money for police and greater funding for education, public health and housing.

Appearing at the White House with his budget director Shalanda Young, Biden said the proposal sends a clear message to the public about "what we value." He outlined a focus on fiscal responsibility, safety and security and investments to "build a better America."

The document essentially tries to tell voters what a diverse and at times fractured Democratic Party stands for ahead of the midterm elections that could decide whether Congress remains under the party's control.

The bottom line: Biden is proposing a total of $5.8 trillion in federal spending in fiscal 2023, which begins in October, slightly less than what was projected to be spent this year before the supplemental spending bill was signed into law this month. The deficit would be $1.15 trillion.


Biden

There would be $795 billion for defense, $915 billion for domestic programs, and the remaining balance would go to mandatory spending such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and net interest on the national debt.

The higher taxes outlined on Monday would raise $361 billion in revenue over 10 years and apply to the top 0.01% of households. The proposal lists another $1.4 trillion in revenue raised over the next decade through other tax increases that are meant to preserve Biden's pledge to not hike taxes on people earning less than $400,000.

The 156-page plan also shows the splinters that persist in Biden's coalition and the possible gaps between the promises of what is being offered and the realities of what ultimately emerges. Biden has backed many of these ideas previously without necessarily getting a full buy-in from Congress.

The proposal includes a minimum 20% tax on the incomes of households worth $100 million or more, similar to an earlier proposal Democrats in Congress began debating late last year in order to pay for Biden's domestic spending plans. But those spending plans were put on hold after talks with West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin collapsed.

More money would go to support law enforcement, yet bipartisan efforts at police reform have failed. The budget assumes—with a high degree of uncertainty based on forecasts made last November—that inflation at a 40-year peak gets back to normal next year.

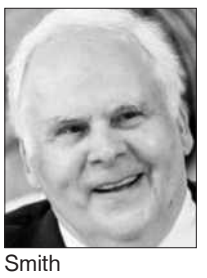
"Budgets are statements of values," Biden said in a statement, "and the budget I am releasing today sends a clear message that we value fiscal responsibility, safety and security at home and around the world, and the investments needed to continue our equitable growth and build a better America."

FedEx founder to step down as CEO in June

FedEx Corp. said Monday that Fred Smith will step down on June 1 as CEO of the package-delivery company that he founded and be succeeded by the company's president and chief operating officer.

Raj Subramaniam will serve as both CEO and president and Smith will become executive chairman, the package-delivery company said.

Smith, 77, started FedEx in 1973, delivering small parcels and documents more quickly than the post office could. Over the next half-century, he oversaw the growth of a company that combined air and ground service and became something of an economic bellwether because of its service to other companies.


Smith

"FedEx has changed the world by connecting people and possibilities for the last 50 years," Smith said in a statement that also praised Subramaniam's ability to guide the company. Smith said he will focus on global issues including sustainability, innovation, and public policy.

Subramaniam, 56, joined the company in 1991 and served in several marketing and management jobs in Asia and the United States. He rose to become the chief marketing and communications officer, and also served as the top executive of FedEx Express. He became president and chief operating officer in 2019 and joined the FedEx board the following year. He will remain a director.

Smith said that for the past several years he had recommended to FedEx directors that if he died or became disabled they should name Subramaniam CEO and appoint an independent chairman. On Monday, the board appointed a current director, Brad Martin, as vice chairman and Smith's designated successor as chairman.

FDA skeptical of experimental ALS drug

WASHINGTON (AP)—Federal health regulators issued a negative review Monday of a closely watched experimental drug for the debilitating illness known as Lou Gehrig's disease, after months of lobbying by patient advocates urging approval.

The drug from Amylyx Pharmaceuticals has become a rallying cause for patients with the deadly neurodegenerative disease ALS, their families and members of Congress who've joined in pushing the Food and Drug Administration to greenlight the drug.

But regulators said in a review that the company's small study was "not persuasive," due to missing data, errors in enrolling patients and other problems. On Wednesday, a panel of FDA advisers will take a non-binding vote on whether the drug should be approved.

The meeting is being closely watched as an indicator of the FDA's approach to experimental drugs with imperfect data and its ability to withstand outside pressure.

The FDA's negative stance on the drug sets up a tense scenario at Wednesday's public session, where several dozen ALS patients and advocates are scheduled to speak. The agency will consider the input from its advisory panel before making a final decision on the drug, expected by June.

ALS, or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, destroys nerve cells needed to walk, talk, swallow and—eventually—breathe. There is no cure and most people die within three to five years.

Nation

3 dead in snowy pileup of dozens of vehicles in Pa.

AP

Interstate 81 North near the Minersville exit, Foster Twp., Pa., was the scene of a multi-vehicle crash on Monday, March 28, 2022.

POTTSVILLE, Pa. (AP)—Tractor-trailers and other vehicles lost control and slammed into each other, people leapt away from careering trucks seconds before collision and at least three people were killed and more than a dozen others injured during a snow squall on a Pennsylvania highway Monday.

The crash on Interstate 81 was captured in videos posted on social media that show drivers and passengers lining the snowy road and jumping out of the way as a cascade of crashes unfolds.

Dr. David J. Moylan, the Schuylkill County coroner, said three fatalities had been confirmed by late afternoon and that number could rise because fires were impeding rescuers.

In one video, an out of control tractor-trailer smashed into a large dump truck turning it nearly 180 degrees, another large truck caught fire and spewed black smoke into the air, and an SUV struck a passenger car sending it spinning narrowly past a person standing on the shoulder in snow and fog.

Video mounted on the dash of a vehicle showed how quickly the road conditions changed. Stopped vehicles rose like a wall in front of the driver, and a person on the roadway stretched their arms out and jumped to escape the runaway vehicle. The impact sounded like thunder.

The Schuylkill County Office of Emergency Management said the crash in northeast Pennsylvania happened around 10:30 a.m. Monday. John Blickley, the agency's deputy emergency management coordinator, said officials believe a snow squall clouded visibility and likely contributed to the crash.

Estimates of the number of vehicles involved from the emergency management agency and state police ranged between 40 and 60, including multiple tractor trailers. Blickley said emergency personnel from four different counties took about 20 patients to area hospitals for treatment. Three tractor trailers carrying unknown cargo were on fire when emergency personnel arrived and some smaller vehicles were also on fire, he said.

ACROSS THE NATION

'Don't Say Gay' bill signed by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP)—Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis signed a bill into law on Monday that forbids instruction on sexual orientation and gender identity in kindergarten through third grade, a policy that has drawn intense national scrutiny from critics who argue it marginalizes LGBTQ people. The legislation has pushed Florida and DeSantis, an ascending Republican and potential 2024 presidential candidate, to the forefront of the country's culture wars. LGBTQ advocates, students, Democrats, the entertainment industry and the White House have dubbed the measure the "Don't Say Gay" law. DeSantis and other Republicans have repeatedly said the measure is reasonable and that parents, not teachers, should be broaching subjects of sexual orientation and gender identity with their children. The law went into effect just days after DeSantis signed a separate bill that potentially restricts what books elementary schools can keep in their libraries or use for instruction.

Biden says remark on Putin's power was about 'moral outrage'

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden said Monday that he would make "no apologies" and wasn't "walking anything back" after his weekend comment that Russian President Vladimir Putin "cannot remain in power," attempting to turn the page on a controversy that clouded his recent trip to Europe. The president also insisted he's not calling for regime change in Moscow, which would have represented a dramatic shift toward direct confrontation with another nuclear-armed country. "I was expressing the moral outrage that I felt toward this man," Biden said. "I wasn't articulating a policy change." The president's jarring remark about Putin, which came at the end of a Saturday speech in Warsaw that was intended to rally democracies for a long global struggle against autocracy, drew criticism in the United States and rattled some allies in Western Europe.

Asia

US, Filipino forces start war drills in area facing Taiwan

Philippines Exercise Director Major Gen. Charlton Sean Gaerlan of the Philippine Navy, left, and U.S. Exercise Director Major Gen. Jay Bargeron, center, of the U.S. Marine Corps unfurls the "Balikatan" or "Shoulder to Shoulder" flag during opening ceremonies of military exercises Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, Philippines on Monday, March 28, 2022. AP

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Thousands of American and Filipino forces began on Monday one of their largest combat exercises in years that will include live-fire maneuvers, aircraft assaults, urban warfare and beach landings in a showcase of U.S. firepower in the northern Philippines near its sea border with Taiwan.

The annual exercises, called Balikatan—Tagalog for shoulder-to-shoulder—will run up to April 8 with nearly 9,000 navy, marines, air force and army troops, including 5,100 American military personnel, to strengthen the long-time treaty allies' "capabilities and readiness for real-world challenges," U.S. and Philippine military officials said.

China will likely frown on the war drills given their relative proximity to Taiwan, which it claims as Chinese territory, but organizers said the exercises don't regard any particular country as a target.

"The U.S. military and Armed Forces of the Philippines will train together to expand and advance shared tactics, techniques, and procedures that strengthen our response capabilities and readiness for real-world challenges," said Maj. Gen. Jay Bargeron, the U.S. 3rd Marine division's commanding general. "Our alliance remains a key source of strength and stability in the Indo-Pacific region."

First staged in 1991, the Balikatan exercises are anchored on the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty, which commits the United States and the Philippines to come to the aid of the other in case of an attack. The allies aim to be strong and seamlessly braced for any security contingency as a deterrence against war. "It's for mutual defense, never for offense," Philippine military spokesman Col. Ramon Zagala said.

The treaty alliance "declares formally our sense of unity and determination to mutually defend against external armed attack, so that no potential aggressor could be under the impression that either of them stands alone," Zagala told The Associated Press.

Suu Kyi misses court hearings due to quarantine

BANGKOK (AP)—Ousted Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi did not attend recent court hearings in which she is a defendant because she has been quarantined due to possible exposure to the coronavirus, a legal official said Monday.

Suu Kyi is being tried in the capital, Naypyitaw, in several cases involving charges of corruption, election fraud and violating a state secrets law.

She has been detained since Feb. 1 last year when the army seized power and prevented her and her party from starting a second five-year term in office after a landslide victory in a 2020 general election.

The legal official, who is familiar with the cases involving Suu Kyi, said the 76-year-old deposed leader missed a hearing on Monday in a case involving corruption charges because she was quarantined after some of the people helping with her care were found to be infected with the coronavirus.

Suu Kyi, who has been vaccinated, has not tested positive, he said.

She is being held at an undisclosed location in Naypyitaw where she has stayed following convictions on lesser charges for which she has been sentenced to six years' imprisonment.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity to avoid retaliation from the military government, which seeks to keep the proceedings secret. All of Suu Kyi's court hearings have been closed to the media, diplomats and other spectators. She has not been seen or allowed to speak in public since she was arrested.

She also missed hearings on the secrets charge last Thursday and election fraud trial on Friday, and will be absent from court again on Tuesday, the legal official said.

Taliban hard-liners turning back clock in Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD (AP)—Taliban hard-liners are turning back the clock in Afghanistan with a flurry of repressive edicts over the past days that hark to their harsh rule from the late 1990s.

Girls have been banned from going to school beyond the sixth grade, women are barred from boarding planes if they travel unaccompanied by a male relative. Men and women can only visit public parks on separate days and the use of mobile telephones in universities is prohibited.

It doesn't stop there.

International media broadcasts—including the Pashto and Persian BBC services, which broadcast in the two languages of Afghanistan—are off the air as of the weekend. So are foreign drama series.

Since the Taliban seized control of the country in mid-August, during the last chaotic weeks of the U.S. and NATO pullout after 20 years of war, the international community has been concerned they would impose the same strict laws as when they previously ruled Afghanistan.

The latest assault on women's rights came earlier this month, when the all-male and religiously driven Taliban government broke its promise to allow girls to return to school after the sixth grade. The move stunned much of the world—and many in Afghanistan—especially after the Taliban had given all "the necessary assurances" that this was not going to happen.

World

Ukrainians claim to retake ground ahead of new talks

Ukrainian soldiers watch debris from a Russian tank after recent fights in the town of Trostsyanets, some 400km (250 miles) east of capital Kyiv, Ukraine, Monday, March 28, 2022. AP

LVIV, Ukraine (AP)—Ukrainian forces claimed to have retaken a Kyiv suburb and an eastern town from the Russians in what is becoming a back-and-forth stalemate on the ground, while negotiators began assembling for another round of talks Tuesday aimed at stopping the fighting.

Ahead of the talks, to be held in Istanbul, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said his country is prepared to declare its neutrality, as Moscow has demanded, and is open to compromise on the fate of the Donbas, the contested region in the country's east.

The mayor of Irpin, a northwestern Kyiv suburb that has been the scene of some of the heaviest fighting near the capital, said Monday that the city has been "liberated" from Russian troops.

Zelenskyy warned that Russian forces are trying to regroup after losing the area.

"We still have to fight, we have to endure," the president said late Monday in his nighttime video address to the nation. "We can't express our emotions now. We can't raise expectations, simply so that we don't burn out."

Irpin gained wide attention after photos circulated of a mother and her two children who were killed by shelling as they tried to flee, their bodies lying on the pavement with luggage and a pet carrier nearby.

A senior U.S. defense official said the U.S. believes the Ukrainians have also retaken the town of Trostyanets, south of Sumy, in the east.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss U.S. intelligence assessments, said Russian forces largely remained in defensive positions near the capital, Kyiv, and were making little forward progress elsewhere in the country.

WORLD BRIEFS

3 dead as small plane crashes into Mexican grocery store

MEXICO CITY (AP)—A small plane crashed through a wall of a supermarket just south of Mexico City on Monday, killing three people and injuring four. Officials said the three dead were aboard the King Air twin-engine plane, which has a capacity of about nine passengers. The civil defense office in the state of Morelos did not say whether the inured were passengers or people shopping in the store. Photos distributed by the office showed the airplane's fuselage lying amid scattered household goods inside the store in the town of Temixco, on the outskirts of the city of Cuernavaca. The craft apparently crashed through a cinderblock wall and hit the cleaning products section. Its tail and wings were nearly shorn off. The FlightAware website said the plane had taken off from the Pacific coast resort of Acapulco.

Brazil's Bolsonaro in hospital after feeling discomfort

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP)—Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro was being examined at an army hospital in the capital due to a possible intestinal obstruction, a key minister said late Monday. The institutional security minister, Gen. Augusto Heleno, confirmed to The Associated Press that Bolsonaro had been taken to the hospital in Brasilia. Brazil's president has been in and out of hospitals since he was stabbed in his abdomen at a campaign event before the 2018 elections. Bolsonaro has undergone seven surgeries since he became president in 2019. Brazilian media reported that the president had felt discomfort since lunchtime.

20 killed in attack on clandestine cock fight in Mexico

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Gunmen burst into a clandestine cock fight and opened fire, killing 20 people and wounding four, prosecutors in Mexico's western state of Michoacan said Monday. Three women were among the dead after the attack late Sunday near the town of Zinapecuaro. The attackers apparently planned the attack, and entered in a stolen truck owned by a snack food company, according to prosecutors. "The snack food company truck arrived, and several armed people in camoflauge clothing got out," a prosecutors' statement said. "At the same moment, a bus that was outside the building was used as a blockade," apparently to prevent victims from escaping or calling for help, it said. Investigators found 15 vehicles that apparently belonged to the victims, one of which bore stickers with the logo of a criminal gang.

FIRST YEAR DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF

†Retta Sue Sablan Hamilton

We would like to invite relatives and friends to join us in prayer as we commemorate the first-year death anniversary of our beloved †Retta Sue's passing into eternal life.

Daily mass of intentions will be offered March 30 - April 7, 2022 at:

Kristo Rai Church – 6:00am daily

Santa Soledad Church – 6:00pm daily
On April 3, Sunday at 10:00am

San Vicente Church
On April 4, Monday at 6:00pm

Thank you, Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Olomwaay

Delia Reyes Sablan and Family

Good Housekeeping

Benches, ottomans provide form and function

(SCOTT GABRIEL MORRIS/TNS)
A classic bench helps to fill a void in an urban living room.

By CATHY HOBBS
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Looking for a way to add both form and function to a space? Consider a bench or ottoman. Not only do these smaller scale furniture pieces provide functionality, in many cases they can be the best fit and furniture solution in size and scale. Need ideas on the best way to incorporate benches and ottomans into your home? Here are some top tips!

DO'S

1. Do consider ottomans in entry areas. They can serve as an alternative to a case good such as a console while still helping to convey a point of entry.
2. Do use benches or ottomans as additional seating in social areas such as living and family rooms.
3. Do use benches and ottomans as a way to infuse color and texture into a room.
4. Do use ottomans and benches in areas in which small-scale furniture selections are appropriate.
5. Do use benches and ottomans to make a design statement.

DON'TS

1. Don't ignore opportunities to use benches and ottomans as a finishing touch in a space such as at the foot of a bed.
2. Don't use ottomans and benches in overly large rooms. They may appear too small in large spaces.
3. Don't use ottomans and benches in ways that don't provide function. Avoid using them in a purely decorative way. Function is best.
4. Don't ignore opportunities to use benches and ottomans in unexpected ways such as a coffee table.
5. Don't forget that ottomans and benches are modular and versatile and can be used in pairs or groupings if needed.

First-time home buyers' mistakes

By AMANDA BELL
ANGIE'S LIST

The experience of buying your first home often brings up a lot of emotions. With so many new considerations and complicated processes to navigate, it's easy to get tripped up in details and make costly mistakes.

Read on to learn how to avoid making common first-time buyer missteps.

Don't skip home loan qualification

Once you decide to buy a home, it's tempting to start touring properties right away. Cheryl Grant, Realtor at Keller Williams North in Grand Rapids, Michigan, advises you to resist.

Instead, make your first stop a lending office. Figure out how much you qualify to borrow before wasting your own time and that of a seller, she says. You don't want to sign a contract only to discover the bank won't loan you the necessary funds.

Know what you can afford

Many first-time buyers fail to budget properly, often confusing what they can afford with what lenders tell them they qualify to borrow. If you haven't yet, make a list of your monthly expenses before settling on a house budget.

"You absolutely should not be looking at homes out of your price range," says Brian Pakulla, a Realtor at Pakulla Professionals Re/Max Advantage Realty in Ellicott City, Maryland.

Doing so could cause you to stretch your finances too thin or make you feel dissatisfied when you do budget and then start to look at homes in your price range, he says.

Don't focus too much on the flaws

It's fun to dream about the items on your wish list, but some first-time buyers have a hard time compromising to meet their budgets. Don't let outdated features steer you away from a house that otherwise meets your criteria. On the other hand, don't compromise on your must-haves.

"You can always change the cosmetics of a house, but you can't change the view, location or floor plan easily," Pakulla says.

Don't fall blindly in love

You think you find "the one" and immediately develop an emotional connection to it, never mind the leaky roof and creaky floors. You jump to put an offer in, but your real estate agent urges you to reconsider.

At that point, Grant says take heed. Falling head over heels for a home can blind you to its true value or flaws that should be deal-breakers.

Don't wait too long

Today's housing market is competitive. If you spend too much time debating whether to put in an offer, a quicker buyer may snatch up the house you've been eyeing.

"Some first-time buyers have a difficult time moving that quickly even if it's a good home in their price range," Grant says. "My job is to explain how fast you need to move in this market, but I don't make people do anything if they're not comfortable. I show them the pros and cons and help them make the right decision."

Don't skip the home inspection

Once a seller accepts your offer you may be tempted to fast-forward the process and skip the home inspection, but it's important to know if the house is in solid shape.

Aside from helping to identify any major structural flaws, a home inspection can help you budget for future maintenance issues. Consider it a "new home" orientation, Pakulla says.

"Go through the inspection to understand how your future home operates mechanically," he says. "It'll have some blemishes, but you'll learn and make sure nothing will be a major pitfall."

Keep resale in mind

It might seem preposterous to think about selling a house you haven't yet purchased, but experts recommend planning ahead. Many buyers don't factor in features that could affect a home's resale value, like number of bedrooms or whether it has a garage or basement, or if the home will suit their future needs, which is a common mistake.

"So many first-time buyers say they aren't thinking of children now, so school districts aren't a consideration for them," Grant says.

Even if you're not planning to have children, she says a home's location within a coveted school district often leads to a higher resale value down the line.

Amanda Bell is a reporter at Angie's List, a trusted provider of local consumer reviews and an online marketplace of services from top-rated providers.

Casserole epitome of comfort

By GINNA PARSONS
NORTHEAST MISSISSIPPI DAILY JOURNAL, TUPELO

OK, I'm just going to say this right from the beginning. There is nothing even remotely healthy about this recipe.

But sometimes, you just need comfort food, and anything that contains chicken, pasta, bacon and cheese always gets my attention.

If you want to feel more virtuous, make it for a potluck dinner and only have a small serving.

CHICKEN-BACON RANCH CASSEROLE

8 ounces mini penne, uncooked
4 bacon slices, chopped
1 tablespoon minced garlic
3/4 cup heavy whipping cream
1 (8-ounce) block cream cheese, cubed and softened
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
2 tablespoons dry ranch dressing mix
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
3 cups shredded rotisserie chicken
2 cups Mozzarella cheese, shredded and divided
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

Cook penne according to package directions; drain, reserving 1 cup cooking water. Place pasta in a large bowl, and set aside.

Heat a large skillet over medium. Add bacon, and cook, stirring often, until crisp, about 5 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer bacon to a plate lined with paper towels. Reserve drippings in skillet.

Add garlic to hot drippings in skillet over medium, and cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Whisk in whipping cream and cream cheese; cook, whisking often, until cream cheese is melted and mixture is smooth, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat, and stir in Parmesan, ranch dressing mix, pepper, and reserved 1 cup cooking water. Pour over pasta. Fold in chicken and 1 cup Mozzarella. Pour mixture into a 9x13-inch baking dish. Top with bacon and remaining 1 cup cheese.

Bake at 375 degrees until golden and bubbly, about 20 minutes. Sprinkle with parsley and serve.

Life & Style

Will Smith apologizes: 'I was out of line and I was wrong'

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The day after slapping Chris Rock on the Oscars stage and upending the 94th Academy Awards, Will Smith issued an apology to the comedian, to the academy and to viewers at home, saying he was "out of line" and that his actions are "not indicative of the man I want to be."

The fallout from Smith's actions during Sunday's ceremony continued Monday as Hollywood and the public continued to wrestle with a moment that stunned the Dolby Theatre crowd and viewers at home. The Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences condemned Smith striking Rock, who had made a joke about his wife, Jada Pinkett Smith, and said it would launch an inquiry.

Later in the day, Smith gave a stronger apology than he did in his best actor acceptance speech, which notably hadn't included an apology to Rock.

"Violence in all of its forms is poisonous and destructive," said Smith in a statement issued by his publicist and posted on Instagram. "My behavior at last night's Academy Awards was unacceptable and inexcusable. Jokes at my expense are a part of the job, but a joke about Jada's medical condition was too much for me to bear and I reacted emotionally. I would like to publicly apologize to you, Chris. I was out of line and I was wrong. I am embarrassed and my actions were not indicative of the man I want to be. There is no place for violence in a world of love and kindness."

The 53-year-old actor added apologies to the film academy, producers of the telecast, attendees, viewers and the Williams family. Smith was honored Sunday for his role as Richard Williams, father of Venus and Serena, in "King Richard."

"I am a work in progress," added Smith.

After calling a board of governors meeting Monday to discuss the incident, the film academy said that it review Smith's actions and "will explore further action and consequences in accordance with our bylaws, standards of conduct and California law." The Los Angeles Police Department said Sunday it was aware of the incident but was not pursuing an investigation because the person involved declined to file a police report.

AP

Will Smith, right, hits presenter Chris Rock on stage while presenting the award for best documentary feature at the Oscars on Sunday, March 27, 2022, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.

Smith shocked the Dolby Theatre crowd and viewers at home when he took the stage after Rock, appearing as a presenter, joked: "Jada, I love you. 'G.I. Jane 2,' can't wait to see it."

The joke touched a nerve. Pinkett Smith, whose head is shaved, has spoken publicly about her alopecia diagnosis. Smith strode on stage and slapped Rock across the face. Back in his seat, Smith twice shouted for Rock to "get my wife's name out your (expletive) mouth." His words echoed clearly throughout the Dolby, though broadcaster ABC cut the audio for about 15 seconds. Within an hour, Smith won best actor, receiving a standing ovation. During his five-minute acceptance speech, Smith spoke about defending his family. He also apologized to the academy.

Rock's joke wasn't part of his routine during the rehearsals leading up to the show, according to two sources close to production who were not authorized to speak publicly.

But Rock had joked about Pinkett Smith before. He hosted the 2016 Oscars, when some were boycotting the ceremony over the #OscarsSoWhite group of nominees, including the Smiths. Said Rock then: "Jada boycotting the Oscars is like me boycotting Rihanna's panties. I wasn't invited."

Smith's actions rattled a pivotal Oscar ceremony. Until that moment, producer Will Packer had steered an orderly and lighthearted telecast that the academy hoped would restore the Academy Awards following last year's record-low ratings. Sunday's ceremony reached an estimated 15.36 million viewers, according to preliminary Nielsen company numbers Monday. While a marked improvement over the 9.85 million that watched last year, it was still the second-least viewed Oscars.

Some academy members, like writer-producer Marshall Herskovitz, called for the academy to take disciplinary action against Smith.

"He disgraced our entire community tonight," wrote Herskovitz on Twitter.

Whoopi Goldberg, a member of the Academy's board of governors, said Monday on "The View": "We're not going to take that Oscar from him. There will be consequences, I'm sure."

The Screen Actors Guild also weighed in. The film, television and radio union called the incident "unacceptable." SAG said that it had been in contact with the academy and ABC, and it doesn't comment on the guild's own disciplinary process.

Oscars audience tops 15 million, exceeding last year

NEW YORK (AP)—Television ratings for the Oscars rebounded somewhat from last year's record low, but the event clearly doesn't have the appeal to viewers that it once had.

Sunday's ceremony reached an estimated 15.36 million viewers, according to preliminary Nielsen company numbers released on Monday by ABC. A more detailed estimate is expected Tuesday, with elements like out-of-home viewing added.

"CODA" won best picture in Sunday's ceremony, but all of the winners and losers were overshadowed by best actor winner Will Smith storming the stage to slap comic Chris Rock because of a joke Rock made about Smith's wife, Jada Pinkett Smith.

Held in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 ceremony had reached a startlingly low 9.85 million viewers. That led to several changes in the Oscars going into this year, including the addition of hosts and awarding eight categories ahead of the broadcast and editing them into the live show.

While that clearly seemed to help, an audience of 15 million is still below the 23.6 million people who watched the Oscars in 2020. Until last year, that was the smallest-ever audience for an Oscars ceremony.

Nielsen did not immediately have more specific viewership numbers for Sunday's show. The research company Samba TV said its own statistics indicate some 1.5 million more households watched the Oscars after the Smith-Rock incident than were watching before.

Viewership for live television events, with the notable exception of NFL football games, has been declining for several years with the advent of streaming and cord-cutting. Some Hollywood observers believe that the relatively niche appeal of many films honored by the Oscars has also limited the audience.

Hillary Clinton to voice 'Into The Woods' role in Arkansas

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP)—Hillary Clinton will play the offstage role of the Giant in a production of Stephen Sondheim's "Into The Woods" in her onetime home state of Arkansas, the Arkansas Repertory Theatre announced on Monday.

Clinton

"Real news, and I'm really excited! Check out the production if you're in Little Rock," Clinton tweeted and her spokesperson confirmed to The Associated Press. Clinton was the first lady of Arkansas before she was the first lady of the United States, a senator representing New York, secretary of state and then presidential candidate.

The "Into The Woods" Giant is the vengeful widow of the giant who Jack killed after climbing the beanstalk. The Giant does not appear on stage, and the voice part is usually prerecorded.

The show runs April 19 to May 15.

Clinton has previously had cameo roles in the television shows "Madam Secretary" and "Murphy Brown."

Stepmom learns of teen's shocking online activity

DEAR ABBY: I have been married to my husband for a little over three years. I have two teen girls, and he has one. They get along for the most part, but lately my 18-year-old, "Lindsay," and his 17-year-old, "Taylor," have been clashing.

They were brought up very differently, and sometimes it causes waves because I expect more from my girls than he does his daughter. To be fair, my stepdaughter's mother has had some serious issues and has never been a role model.

During one of these clashes, Lindsay told me Taylor has been doing some very explicit and dangerous things online. This was confirmed by her boyfriend. Lindsay, of course, told me hoping to get Taylor in trouble or to lessen her in my eyes, since they were arguing. I "get" the inner workings of the teenage girl's mind. It's not always a kind place.

What do I do with this information? Should I tell her father? What purpose would it serve? If I don't tell him, am I keeping a secret that I shouldn't?

KNOWS TOO MUCH IN NEW YORK

DEAR KNOWS: If you and your husband have investigated this and found it to be true, talk to Taylor. Point out that images she has posted online do not age out and disappear. They can linger forever, which could have serious consequences when she is older and looking at college, getting into the workforce, etc. While she can't change what she has already done, she can wise up and quit what she has been doing NOW.

■■■■

DEAR ABBY: A close friend has just announced—out of the blue—that she's running for a prominent public office. It's going to be a contentious race, and it's likely to get ugly for whomever runs. She sent out messages this week assuming her friends will be supporting her through our social networks, door knocking, hosting fundraising events and whatever else she needs. She said she's looking forward to working with us.

Abby, the way her announcements are worded, I can tell she's going to be blindsided when I decline her "request." She assumes that because we are friends, I would want her in office. However, in my opinion, she's not the best person for the job, and I have other civic engagements I'm already committed to this year. I also feel that maybe she should have actually asked. Is there any way I can maintain the friendship without supporting the candidate? I don't see what the graceful way out is, and her conversation is already oriented toward "us" vs. "them."

HIDING UNTIL THE PRIMARIES

DEAR HIDING: Explain to your friend that you are already committed to other "civic engagements" this year and, because of time constraints, you can't back out of them. Then wish her luck and send her a small financial contribution for her campaign "in the name of friendship."

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

MY TIGER IS DEEP IN SOMNOLENT SLEEP, DREAMING OF CHASES REMEMBERED!
HIS KEEN EYES ARE GLINTING, HE DREAMS OF A SPRINTING SAMBAR WHO'LL SOON BE DISMEMBERED!
HMMMMMMM
Z

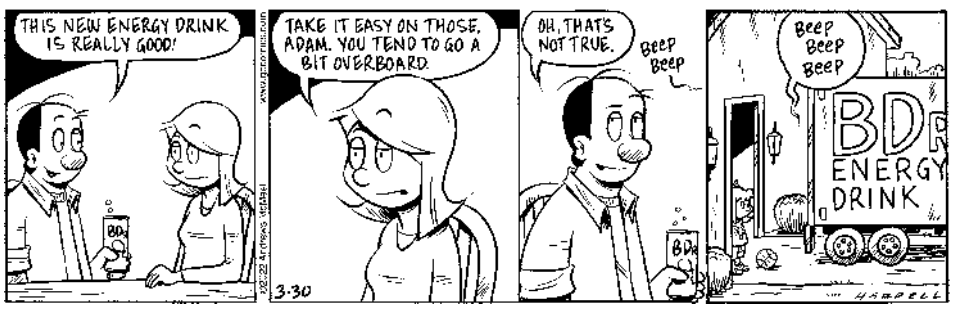
Garfield®

By Jim Davis

BARK! BARK! BARK! SQUEAK! BARK! SQUEAK! BARK! BARK! SQUEAK! SQUEAK!
FASCINATING
HE KNOWS A SURPRISING NUMBER OF STORIES ABOUT RUBBER PORK CHOPS
JIM DAVIS 3-30

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


THIS NEW ENERGY DRINK IS REALLY GOOD!
TAKE IT EASY ON THOSE, ADAM. YOU TEND TO GO A BIT OVERBOARD.
OH, THAT'S NOT TRUE.
BEEP BEEP
BEEP BEEP BEEP
BD ENERGY DRINK
3-30

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

BARK BARK BARK YAP YAP ROWF!
BARK BARK GRRR.. ROWF YAP YAP BARK
SURE I COULD FILL IN FOR YOU OUT IN THE YARD.
KNOWING YOUR BATHROOM HABITS, I DON'T DOUBT IT.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Cattle call
4 Chew (on)
8 "I'm f-f-freezing!"
12 Notable time
13 Novelist Jaffe
14 Summer month in Paris
15 Fixed
16 Type of china
18 [Yawn]
20 Homer's cry
21 Pool-room prop
24 Hinder
28 Cooking show from Japan
32 TV explorer
33 Cain, to Eve
34 British nobles
36 Little louse
37 Craving
39 Tyson's moniker
41 Gather wool
43 Victor's cry
44 Motor City labor org.
46 Romanced
50 Smelting site
55 Hindu honorific
56 Beer ingredient
57 Henry —
58 Chaney of horror films
59 Praiseful pieces
60 Israel's Abba
61 Sugary suffix

DOWN
1 Screen material
2 Popular layered cookie
3 Vow
4 Anguished look
5 Hide-hair insert
6 Year in Acapulco
7 Wizard's prop
8 Washed
9 Aussie hopper
10 Scoot
11 Numbered rd.
17 Lawn material
19 Coffee vessel
22 Spiced tea
23 Gymnast Strug
25 "Beloved" author Morrison
26 Composer Satie
27 Assess
28 Egyptian deity
29 IRA type
30 "Measure twice, cut —"
31 Circulate
35 Strands during a blizzard
38 Hangouts
40 6 on a phone
42 Cold and damp
45 Used a loom
47 Ibsen's home
48 Cupid's alias
49 Eat in style
50 Texter's "As I see it"
51 "Way cool!"
52 Flamenco cheer
53 Tease
54 Sportage maker

Solution time: 23 mins.

R	E	E	L		F	L	A	P		B	A	M
A	L	F	A		L	O	B	O		E	L	O
F	I	G	U	R	E	C	U	T		L	E	O
			P	A	W	S		H	E	L	E	N
A	C	R	E	S			F	E	L	T		
B	I	E	R		S	N	E	A	K	C	U	T
L	A	P		T	O	Y	E	D		W	R	Y
Y	O	U	R	E	O	U	T		W	E	A	R
		B	E	L	T			M	A	R	L	A
T	I	L	D	E		H	A	I	R			
A	N	I		C	H	I	L	L	S	C	U	T
C	C	C		C	O	P	S		A	C	N	E
O	Y	S		M	I	S	O		W	H	A	T

Yesterday's answer 3-30

1	2	3	■	4	5	6	7	■	8	9	10	11
12			■	13				■	14			
15			■	16				17				
18			19		■	■	20			■	■	■
■	■	■	21		22	23	■	24		25	26	27
28	29	30					31	■	32			
33			■	34				35	■	36		
37			38	■	39				40			
41				42	■	43				■	■	■
■	■	■	44		45	■	■	46		47	48	49
50	51	52				53	54			■	55	
56				■	57						58	
59				■	60					■	61	

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Samantha Win, 31; Katy Mixon, 41; Celine Dion, 54; Eric Clapton, 77.

Happy Birthday: Stay fixed on the results, and don't deviate this year. An impulsive move will be to your detriment and take much longer to reverse than you anticipate. Target your energy where it will do the most and ensure that you leave nothing undone. Stipulate your concerns and goals when dealing with people who offer good advice and hands-on help. Exhibit self-control. Your numbers are 9, 17, 23, 27, 30, 35, 43.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Speak your mind, oversee anything you want others to do correctly. You'll get plenty of help, but it won't all be adequate. Consistency and responsibility are necessary if you're going to reach your mark. Impulsiveness will come with a price. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Look inward, and make adjustments that soothe your soul. Put an end to what makes you unhappy, and take charge of your life. Be responsible and make decisions that cater to self-improvement and independence. Personal and spiritual growth are favored. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Put your heart into whatever you choose to do, and don't let anyone lead you astray. Take the initiative, think for yourself, and do what's right and best for you. Put your energy to good use, and you will achieve your goal. ✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Let your actions speak for you. Dive into what's important to you, and you'll overcome any barrier you encounter. Expand your skills and qualifications, and seek help from experts or those who can connect you to influential people. ✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Distance yourself from anyone making unrealistic moves. Don't jeopardize your position or reputation or take responsibility for someone's blunder. Stand your ground, protect your rights and secure your future. Assess relationships that are teetering, and align yourself with like-minded people. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Take pride in what you do, and share what you discover with people working toward achieving similar results. A partnership that brings out the best in you looks promising. Networking, pursuing educational opportunities and changing your scenery will enhance your life. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Put your finger on the pulse of whatever you want. It's up to you to revise your schedule to help you achieve your goals. You can't depend on others to make you happy, but you can strive to do so yourself. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Test the water, head in a direction that flows peacefully toward something that makes you feel good about yourself, what you can contribute. Personal growth will help you discard what is no longer required to achieve peace. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Explore possibilities, but don't believe everything you hear. If something sounds too good to be true, ask questions. Use your intelligence and physical attributes to narrow down what's best for you. Avoid temptation and indulgence. ✪✪

CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* You'll gain insight into what's possible. Consider how to tweak your skills to suit trends, and you'll discover a unique path that offers incentives and initiates the discipline to try something new and exciting. A domestic change is encouraged. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Don't look around when you need to focus on what's in front of you. Consider what you enjoy doing and how you can add to your qualifications to help you excel. Making a move before you are ready will lead to setbacks. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Let your emotions and intuition lead the way, and you'll discover how to incorporate your dreams into your routine. Procrastination will not get you closer to your happy place, but actions will encourage you to give it your best shot. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are sensitive, unique and compassionate. You are generous and helpful.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	7				3			
2			8		4			9
	9		1	7	3		4	
		8				4		
9		4				2		6
	2	5				7	9	
		1				6		
	8		6	1	7		5	
	7						1	

Difficulty Level ★★★ 3/30

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

4	2	3	7	5	1	6	8	9
9	8	5	3	6	4	2	1	7
7	6	1	9	8	2	3	4	5
3	7	2	8	1	9	4	5	6
5	1	6	2	4	7	9	3	8
8	4	9	5	3	6	7	2	1
6	5	7	4	2	8	1	9	3
2	9	8	1	7	3	5	6	4
1	3	4	6	9	5	8	7	2

Difficulty Level ★★

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

IT'S STIPULATED Solution: 10 letters

C	O	L	L	I	W	L	A	S	S	I	M	S	I	D
D	S	L	I	A	T	E	D	E	N	E	D	N	H	R
D	I	S	I	T	E	M	L	D	A	R	C	E	E	O
I	E	V	E	T	O	U	Q	F	O	T	E	U	A	W
A	E	S	O	D	R	A	F	T	L	R	L	D	R	L
R	I	F	O	R	B	E	A	R	E	A	T	I	R	E
R	A	C	N	P	C	O	N	Q	G	E	T	R	Ⓜ	O
A	G	L	O	A	M	E	U	N	R	T	E	Ⓤ	L	T
N	R	A	I	U	P	I	I	M	E	A	Ⓢ	E	U	N
G	E	U	T	S	R	F	S	N	D	I	T	T	F	E
E	E	S	O	E	E	T	P	A	R	T	Y	A	W	M
M	M	E	M	I	P	Y	E	N	R	O	T	T	A	U
E	E	E	R	T	A	E	V	A	C	G	S	S	L	C
N	N	B	P	U	R	C	H	A	S	E	M	I	T	O
T	T	N	A	N	E	V	O	C	E	N	I	F	E	D

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Agreement, Arrangement, Attorney, Briefing, Caveat, Clause, Court, Covenant, Deal, Define, Details, Dismissal, Divorce, Document, Draft, Flat, Forbear, Hear, Imposed, Item, Lawful, Loans, Motion, Negotiate, Order, Party, Pause, Prepare, Purchase, Quote, Read, Requirement, Rules, Secure, Settle, Site, State, Sum, Terms, Test, Time, Waiver, Will, Word, Written

Yesterday's Answer: Carrots

Treasuries 27, 29, 31 and 33 through 47 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

Siakam, Raptors beat short-handed Boston in overtime

TORONTO (AP)— Pascal Siakam had a season-high 40 points and 13 rebounds before fouling out, and the Toronto Raptors beat the short-handed Boston Celtics 115-112 in overtime on Monday night.

Fred VanVleet and OG Anunoby scored 14 points apiece, Thad Young and Gary Trent Jr. each had 12, and Scottie Barnes scored 10 before fouling out as Toronto snapped a four-game home losing streak against the Celtics.

Playing without forwards Jaylen Brown and Jason Tatum (sore knees) and centers Al Horford and Robert Williams III, Boston lost for the fifth time in 29 games.

Marcus Smart had 28 points and 10 rebounds, Grant Williams scored 17, and Derrick White added 15 for Boston. Seven Celtics players scored 10 points or more, including Daniel Theis, who had 13 points and 10 rebounds.

Boston fell one game behind Miami for first in the East. The Celtics host the Heat on Wednesday night.

AP

Toronto Raptors guard Fred VanVleet (23) drives the ball downcourt during second-half NBA basketball game action against the Boston Celtics in Toronto, Monday, March 28, 2022.

Heat 123, Kings 100

In Miami, Jimmy Butler scored 27 points, Bam Adebayo added 22 points and 15 rebounds, and Miami stopped a four-game skid with a win over Sacramento.

Tyler Herro had 20 for the Heat, who improved to 36-5 when scoring at least 110 points.

Davion Mitchell scored 21 for Sacramento, which got 17 from Harrison Barnes.

Miami snapped its longest losing streak of the season, and the 23-point margin was the largest for the Heat since a 24-point win at Atlanta on Jan. 12.

Knicks 109, Bulls 104

In New York, RJ Barrett scored 28 points, Alec Burks had 27 and New York extended its winning streak to four games by beating Chicago.

Obi Toppin had 17 points for the Knicks, who remained 4 1/2 games behind Atlanta for 10th place in the Eastern Conference and the final play-in spot with only six games remaining.

DeMar DeRozan scored 37 for the Bulls, including 15 in the fourth quarter. But he missed a jumper and then was called for an offensive foul in the final 45 seconds, cutting short Chicago's comeback attempt.

Cavaliers 107, Magic 101

In Cleveland, Darius Garland had 25 points and 12 assists, leading Cleveland to a victory over Orlando in a game in which the Cavaliers lost rookie big man Evan Mobley to a sprained left ankle.

Mobley, the No. 3 overall pick, landed on the foot of Franz Wagner while defending under the basket in the second quarter. He limped to the locker room after briefly laying on the court and did not return to the game.

Lauri Markkanen scored 20 points, Kevin Love had 19 points and seven rebounds, and Isaac Okoro added 11 points for the Cavaliers, who snapped a three-game losing streak.

The Cavaliers clinched their first winning season in four years. It is the first time they will finish above .500 without LeBron James on their roster since 1997-1998.

Magic power forward Wendell Carter Jr. had 15 points, 12 rebounds and six assists, Ignas Brazdeikis scored 13 points and Wagner had 10 points and six assists.

Nuggets 113, Hornets 109

In Charlotet, N.C., Nikola Jokic had 26 points, 19 rebounds and 11 assists for his 19th triple-double of the season, and Denver held on to beat Charlotte.

Aaron Gordon added 21 points and Will Barton scored 18 for the Nuggets, who earned a split of the season series.

Miles Bridges had 27 points and 11 rebounds and LaMelo Ball added 22 points, 11 assists and six rebounds for Charlotte, which fell to 1-13 in the second night of back-to-backs. The loss dropped the Hornets to ninth place in the Eastern Conference, a half-game behind the idle Brooklyn Nets.

Hawks 132, Pacers 123

In Indianapolis, Bogdan Bogdanovic scored 29 points to lead Atlanta past Indiana.

Clint Capela and Kevin Huerter each contributed 22 points, and Capela added 15 rebounds for the Hawks, who are 10th in the Eastern Conference. Trae Young had 14 points and 16 assists.

Buddy Hield scored 26 points for the Pacers, who have lost four consecutive games and are out of playoff contention. Tyrese Haliburton had 25 points and 13 assists. Keifer Sykes added 16 points for Indiana, hitting 4 of 6 3-pointers.

Grizzlies 123, Warriors 95

In Memphis, Tenn., Desmond Bane scored 22 points, De'Anthony Melton and Dillon Brooks added 21 points each and Memphis solidified its hold on second place in the Western Conference with a win over short-handed Golden State.

Kyle Anderson added 13 points for Memphis, which holds a five-game lead over the third-place Warriors in the conference. The Grizzlies won their fifth straight and for the ninth time in 10 games.

Jordan Poole led Golden State with 25 points, and Moses Moody finished with 18. Jonathan Kuminga scored 14 points as Golden State dropped its third straight and lost for the sixth time in seven games.

Spurs 123, Rockets 120

In Houston, Dejounte Murray scored a career-high 33 points and San Antonio held on for a win over Houston to inch closer to the final play-in spot in the Western Conference.

It was the fourth straight victory for the Spurs, who moved within a half-game of the Los Angeles Lakers for the 10th spot in the West.

Keldon Johnson had 21 points and Jakob Poeltl added 17 points with 13 rebounds as the Spurs dominated inside, outscoring Houston 72-30 in the paint.

Rookie Jalen Green had 30 points and Kevin Porter Jr. added 26 for the Rockets, whose two-game winning streak was snapped.

Thunder 134, Trail Blazers 131, OT

In Portland, Ore., Isaiah Roby scored a career-high 30 points on 11-of-13 shooting and Oklahoma City rallied in overtime to beat Portland.

Aaron Wiggins added a career-best 28 points for the Thunder, who remain in second-to-last place in the Western Conference with losses in 11 of their last 13 games.

Ben McLemore had 28 points off the bench, including eight 3-pointers, for the Trail Blazers. Portland has lost four straight and sits outside the playoff picture at 12th in the West.

West side's story: Suns top seed, plenty left to decide

DENVER (AP)—Reigning NBA MVP Nikola Jokic and the Denver Nuggets certainly figured a recent stretch of winning 14 of 18 games would propel them in the Western Conference standings.

Or at least give them some breathing room in the postseason race.

Not the case.

What their 14-4 run did was allow them to merely tread water in the sixth spot — teetering on the brink of tumbling into the play-in scenario for the teams that finish between seventh and 10th in the conference.

"The depth of the Western Conference, I think, is incredible," marveled Nuggets coach Michael Malone, whose team has been playing without injured standouts Jamal Murray and Michael Porter Jr. "The West is loaded."

The final two weeks of the regular season should provide entertaining theater as teams jockey for playoff position. With, of course, the notable exception of the Phoenix Suns, who can sit back and wait to see who they play after sewing up the top seed in the West.

Everyone else has work to do.

In the East, there is very little settled, either. The top six teams are separated by just 4 1/2 games, with Miami currently leading the way. The Heat have a big matchup with Boston on Wednesday night.

Every matchup is a big one for the Lakers.

The road may have gotten even bumpier for them after LeBron James hurt his ankle. He very well could be limited going forward — or even possibly miss some time.

Obviously, the Lakers can't afford that. Not with the Lakers dangerously close to falling out of the play-in. The New Orleans Pelicans are in the No. 9 spot and the Lakers in 10th.

There was a preview of that possible matchup Sunday as the Pelicans rallied from 23 points down late in the second quarter to knock off the Lakers 116-108. James didn't hide his feelings over blowing a big lead in a game in which he twisted his left ankle.

"Excuse my language but that's what it feels like," James said after using profanity to describe his emotions. "It feels like another wasted opportunity obviously for myself and for our team."

There's no margin for error for the Lakers with the San Antonio Spurs — winners of four straight — only a half-game out of the last spot.

At the moment, the Los Angeles Clippers occupy the eighth position. Imagine if they were to get back some combination of Paul George, Kawhi Leonard and Norman Powell.

All of a sudden, they're an even scarier eighth seed.

The current standings would pit the Clippers against the Timberwolves in a play-in scenario. But the Timberwolves could still catch the Nuggets for No. 6.

Karl-Anthony Towns and the Timberwolves remain two games behind the Nuggets and they play Friday in Denver. Whoever grabs the sixth seed will more than likely draw Steph Curry and the Golden State Warriors, who are third in the standings. Memphis comfortably sits in the second spot.

"It's really, really hard going into the playoffs to predict a clear winner," said Oklahoma City coach Mark Daigneault, whose team is eliminated from the postseason but closes the season by playing the Jazz, Lakers and Clippers. "It's been a bear of a conference for a long time."

That's why being at home could mean everything. Which is precisely why the Dallas Mavericks' 114-100 win over the Utah on Sunday may prove so pivotal.

The Mavericks moved a game ahead of the Jazz in the race for the fourth and fifth seeds in the West, and earned a split of the season series. The home team has won all four games.

"That's what we wanted, but it's a long way to go," said Mavericks All-Star point guard Luka Doncic, whose team hosts the Lakers on Tuesday night in another important matchup. "We've still got to keep our composure, focus on the next opponent and try to win every game."

Because, as Dallas coach Jason Kidd warned, "this wasn't a playoff game. No one's up 1-0."

Ryan and Reich could be a winning match in Indianapolis

PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP)—For a few weeks, the Indianapolis Colts had a huge void at quarterback. Then the Deshaun Watson carousel began spinning, and soon enough, Matt Ryan was available.

Colts coach Frank Reich couldn't contain his enthusiasm about Ryan on Monday morning as AFC coaches met reporters at the NFL owners meeting. Who can blame Reich?

The Colts' game of musical chairs at the position has been going on for too long, from Andrew Luck's injuries and subsequent retirement through Jacoby Brissett, Philip Rivers and Carson Wentz. Ryan seems to be the right guy to settle in for a while.

"I don't see any diminishing play or skills," Reich said of the 36-year-old Ryan, who was acquired from Atlanta after the Falcons' failed bid to trade for Watson, who went from Houston to Cleveland.

"As soon as he became a possibility ... we were very happy that Matt became available. "That's a credit to (general manager) Chris (Ballard) and his leadership. We were poised. We weren't going to panic."

Once the pieces began to fall together elsewhere, the Colts, who had traded Wentz to Washington earlier in March, asked permission from Atlanta to talk with Ryan, the 2016 league MVP. There was a virtual meeting in which Ryan, Reich and the Colts' staff clicked immediately.

"I had cutups made of a lot of our offensive plays," Reich said. "Just kind of walking through some of your plays, talking offensive football, wanting Matt to envision himself in our offense and some of things that we could do.

"It was apparent very quickly that there was an instant connection in every way. Personally, but also football-wise. The way we think about the game."

AP

Indianapolis Colts quarterback Matt Ryan holds his new jersey following a press conference at the NFL team's practice facility in Indianapolis, Tuesday, March 22, 2022.

HITTING THE STRIP

As if there's not enough for folks to do in Las Vegas, the NFL will offer a main source of entertainment late next month during its draft.

The actual selections will begin Thursday, April 28 with the first round, followed the next day by the second and third rounds, and the final four rounds on April 30. Running concurrently will be the NFL Draft Experience, also on The Strip, located behind the High Roller and the LINQ hotels, adjacent to Caesars Forum.

Construction on the theater where the drafting will occur begins Friday.

"We were on the precipice two years ago and then the world shut down," says Peter O'Reilly, the NFL's executive vice president who handles league events, noting that the virtual draft held in 2020 originally was scheduled for Las Vegas. "We're in a very different world today than we were for the virtual draft. The Los Angeles Super Bowl felt like we are fully back."

On Monday, the league launched NFL OnePass, where fans can download the app to play games at Draft Experience, receive digital content, and enter sweepstakes that include among the prizes a trip for two to the Super Bowl next February in Glendale, Arizona.

The experience itself will have immersive exhibits and a youth-focused Play 60 Zone. The three Vince Lombardi Trophies won by the Raiders will be on hand, as well as a display of Super Bowl rings. There will be opportunities for fans to do a 40-yard dash, and a vertical jump against NFL players on LED screens. A player autograph area also is included.

Each day at the conclusion of the draft will be free concerts in the theater where the actual draft will occur. Artists have yet to be announced.

"We take on the city as a character in the play, to imbed ourselves in the character of the city," O'Reilly says of using iconic locations such as Caesars and the Bellagio's fountains as the backdrop for the draft. "First we have to get the core right, the selection process. And then we have this 'free festival,' the Draft Experience. It's like an oasis in our offseason."

HALL OF FAME CONCERT

The Pro Football Hall of Fame is going back a few decades for its headline act at the Concert for Legends.

Journey will take the stage on Aug. 6, hours after the inductions of the class of 2002, which have been switched to a Saturday afternoon.

Being inducted this year as modern-era players are Sam Mills, Bryant Young, LeRoy Butler, Tony Boselli, Richard Seymour. Coach Dick Vermeil, contributor Art McNally, and senior player Cliff Branch also will be enshrined.

"Journey has been entertaining its fans for almost 50 years since the band's founding, and we are thrilled to be working with Hall of Fame Village to bring these members of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame to the Hall of Fame city," said Jim Porter, president of the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Formed in San Francisco in 1973, Journey is one of the most recognizable groups in rock and pop music, known for megahits "Don't Stop Believin'," "Separate Ways (Worlds Apart)," "Any Way You Want It," "Faithfully," and "Lights."

HARD KNOCKS

The Detroit Lions will be the team in the spotlight during the preseason for HBO's "Hard Knocks" series.

The five-episode series will debut Aug. 9. It is the 17th edition of the Sports Emmy-winning series.

Camera crews will shoot most of the show at the Lions' training camp in Allen Park, Michigan, and will chronicle coach Dan Campbell entering his second season in Detroit. The episodes will be narrated by Liev Schreiber, marking his 16th season with the show.

"We are excited about the opportunity to showcase the city of Detroit and the amazing culture we are building at the Lions," said Lions president and CEO Rod Wood.

Hard Knocks launched with the Ravens in 2001, followed by the Cowboys in 2002. It resumed in 2007 with the Chiefs, followed by the Cowboys (2008), Bengals (2009), Jets (2010), Dolphins (2012), Bengals (2013), Falcons (2014), Texans (2015), Rams (2016), Buccaneers (2017), Browns (2018), and Raiders (2019). For 2020, the show focused on both Los Angeles franchises, and last year Dallas made its third appearance.

RADIO RIGHTS

Cumulus Media's Westwood One, the largest audio network in the nation, and the NFL extended and expanded their partnership Monday. The multi-year agreement was expected; Westwood One has been the official network partner of the NFL for more than three straight decades and 50 years overall.

Westwood One will continue to provide play-by-play coverage for games on Sunday, Monday and Thursday nights; Thanksgiving Day; select international games; and the entire postseason through the Super Bowl. The NFL on Westwood One reaches more than 56 million listeners each season.

Added to the package will be a digital platform element as well as availability of the prime-time broadcasts on the NFL app; expanded coverage of NFL Honors, the scouting combine, the draft, and the schedule release; and mechanisms toward creating new alternate game broadcasts.

"Audio is an important platform for the NFL, and Westwood One has a long history of delivering excellent game broadcasts and other content, said Brent Lawton, league vice president of media strategy and business development.

Sources: Governor to propose $500M for new Titans stadium

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee plans to propose $500 million in bonds in the state budget to help fund a new covered Tennessee Titans stadium envisioned for Nashville, two sources confirmed to The Associated Press.

The two people are familiar with the details of the governor's funding amendment and spoke to the AP on the condition of anonymity because the governor's budget amendment has not been released. It's scheduled for a public discussion Tuesday in front of Tennessee lawmakers, who would also need to approve of the plan to authorize state bonds. The funding would fill in one piece of the puzzle for the Titans, who have gone from trying to modernize the existing Nissan Stadium to working on plans for a new stadium right next door after renovation costs more than doubled to $1.2 billion. Nashville Mayor John Cooper has lowered expectations about any potential funding from the metro government, saying earlier this month that "fundamentally, the city is not in the entertainment or stadium business itself."

The sources mentioned that the new stadium plans would include some kind of roof, with one source saying the funding would be contingent on the stadium being enclosed. A covered stadium, whether it's a fixed or retractable roof, could help Nashville compete for the biggest events in or outside of sports, from the Super Bowl to NCAA basketball Final Four. Axios Nashville first reported on the governor's proposed funding for the new stadium.

The push comes as the Buffalo Bills landed an agreement Monday for a proposed $1.4 billion new open-air stadium, fueled by a record $850 million taxpayer price tag to help secure the franchise's future in the region for the next 30-plus years.

The Bills and Titans stadiums, and the increasing price tags to fund such projects, will undoubtedly reignite arguments over whether taxpayers should be on the hook for new high-end sports facilities.

Earlier this month, Titans President Burke Nihill discussed the team's plans at a Metro Sports Authority board meeting, according to The Tennessean. The Titans currently are working with Metro Nashville officials on the design and costs of building a new stadium on Nissan's parking lots between the stadium and Interstate 24.

Nihill noted inflation is driving costs higher, and both Nashville and the Titans want to finish work in time for the 2026 season.

The stadium opened in 1999 on a 30-year lease and the Titans had originally planned to renovate it for $292 million. Nashville officials have been working on plans for a year to redevelop hundreds of acres around Nissan Stadium on the east bank of the Cumberland River.

That included renovating Nissan Stadium, with the first estimate $600 million. That doubled when contractors raised new concerns about the condition of the stadium and its infrastructure.

Nihill has said a new stadium is the better value in the long run.

"This is a very basic building in the eyes of the NFL," Nihill said. "This is one of the bottom 20% of buildings in the NFL built before 9/11. Security enhancements adopted by the NFL haven't been added."

Nihill estimated that reaching a deal for the new stadium, how to pay for it and design the new building could take more than a year. Construction should take 31 months.

Running community welcomes return of Saipan Marathon

MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

After a year of absence, the Saipan Marathon is back but in a scaled-down version as the organizing Marianas Visitors Authority is only offering the half marathon, 10K, and 5K distances this year due to logistical issues.

Full scale or not the local running community is ecstatic nonetheless and is embracing the return of the event dubbed in the past as the "Festival of Runs."

Northern Marianas Athletics president Ramon Tebuteb is proud that the Saipan Marathon is again on the sports event calendar, especially since it originated from the sports federation.

"We're very happy to participate and we've always been part of the Saipan Marathon. This originated from the Northern Marianas Athletics and then it turned into the MVA signature event. Because the road races and the standards that require them comes from us we were able to facilitate the certification of the course. When they were doing the Saipan Marathon awhile back it wasn't certified so it was significant that it be certified for qualifications and to allow pros to come here and participate. It's standardized and good for pros," he said.

Run Saipan president Edward Dela Cruz Jr. said it's absolutely amazing to see MVA bringing back the half marathon.

"Forever grateful for them and Northern Marianas Athletics. We can do a 5K or 10K anytime but this is what serious runners look forward to and have been begging for since the shutdown. The half is also a distance anyone can do regardless of fitness level. This is also a great opportunity to advertise and bring in Guam's elite runners to compete on the table before the Mini Games. I for one cannot wait for a highly electrifying and hyped atmosphere and experience for us runners this year since its coming back from lockdown for the runners. Can you imagine our anticipation waiting for two long years for this? So, thank you MVA and NMA!" he said.

MARK RABAGO

Run Saipan president Edward Dela Cruz Jr., left and seen here manning the start/finish line of last Saturday's Women's 10K Run with national coach Dr. Ron Snyder, welcomes the return of the Saipan Marathon this year after a two-year sabbatical.

Triathlon Association of the CNMI president Manny Sitchon echoed what Tebuteb and Dela Cruz said about the return of the Saipan Marathon, adding that it would only work wonders in making the community a lot healthier and fitter as participants will now start training for the event.

"The return of the Saipan Marathon is good news to the island's running enthusiasts as well as to the community. It is one of the most well-attended sporting activities in the island that is in line with TRAC's aspiration for a healthy lifestyle. TRAC fully supports the return of the event by manning one of the water stations along the race course. We would like to congratulate the MVA and its support group," he said.

Set for April 9, the last day to register for the Saipan Marathon 2022's half-marathon, 10K, and 5K is Friday, April 1, at 11:59pm. Registration is open at www.raceroster.com and fees are $55 for all three courses for both international and resident participants. Special rates for CNMI students only with valid student identification are $40 for the 10K and 5K.

The event is sponsored by Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands. In-kind contributors are Century Hotel, Serenity Hotel, and Aqua Resort Club Saipan. Aid stations will be provided by Saipan World Resort, Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, Hyatt Regency Saipan, Triathlon Association of the CNMI, IT&E, Aqua Resort Club Saipan, Kensington Hotel Saipan, Coral Ocean Resort, and Pacific Islands Club Saipan. Supporters are Dept. of Public Safety, Dept. of Public Works, American Memorial Park, Division of Fire & Emergency Medical Services, Div. of Parks & Recreation, and Marianas Health Services.

The race follows some of Saipan's most scenic roadways, starting and ending at Micro Beach and American Memorial Park and providing stunning views of the azure blue lagoon along the Beach Road. Race packet pick-up will be available on April 8, 2022, from 5pm to 6:30pm at the American Memorial Park amphitheater. Start time on April 9 is 5:45am for the half-marathon, 6am for the 10K, and 6:10am for the 5K.

Awards will be presented to the Top 3 overall male and Female finishers for the Half Marathon, 10K and 5K. In addition, only the first place male and female finishers in their respective age division category will receive an award. There will be no age divisions for the 5K Run.

The race is a World Athletics™-AIMS Certified Course, as World Athletics™ has agreed to extend the measurement certificates for another 12 months for the Saipan Half Marathon and 10K.

For more information, visit The Marianas Calendar at www.mymarianas.com or contact MVA Community Projects coordinator Ed Diaz at 1.670.664.3210 or ediaz@mymarianas.com.

ROYAL

From Page 20

Tabora then erupted for 17 points in the third, as Royal Pacific extended their advantage to 31 points, 69-38, heading into the last 10 minutes of the contest.

He then capped his explosive night by cruising for another 9 points in the fourth as Royal Pacific improved its win-loss mark to 2-3. Super Tech lost for the fifth time in five games and was led by the 23 markers of Dick Tibayan.

In the second game, Vizion Insurance leveled its record to 3-3 following an 83-67 victory over RNV Construction, who like Super Tech are stuck in the cellar at 0-5. Ronald Rueda fired a game-high 31 points, while Rodel Pastrana tossed in 19 points in the win. Jun Ocampo was the lone bright spot for the losers with 25 markers.

HBR International nosed of Marianas Dental Center, 77-71, in the third game to up its slate to 4-2, while dropping MDC to 2-4

After trailing 22-15 in the first quarter, HBR International cut their deficit to a point at the half before taking a candlestick lead after three quarters of play. The team finally eked out the win thanks to the 12 combined points of J.R. Galang and Mario Rotap in the fourth. Galang scored 25 points in the win, while John Darag was the high-point man for MDC with 16.

In Friday's lone match, The Game won its fourth game in five matches with a 103-86 whipping of 670 Gravity. Mac Mintac lost his scoring duel with Joseph Torres, 31-53, but came out with the "W." The loss was 670 Gravity's fourth in seven tries.

THURSDAY
First Game

Royal Pacific 96 – Tabora 35, Basi 13, Capon 11, Fundador 10, Javier 7, Pasiem 6, Paik 6, Asis 4, Lazatin 2.

Super Tech 73 – Tibayan 23, Ige 15, Santos 9, Sulabo 6, Caraig 6, Daluyen 3, Agulto 2.

Scoring by quarters: 23-14, 44-18, 69-38, 96-73.

Second Game

Vizion Insurance 83 – Rueda 31, Pastrana 19, Regaton 10, Capuyon 8, Mortos 5, Dosno 2, Tagle 2, Bungabong 2.

RNV Construction 67 – Ocampo 25, Baldina 15, Varona 6, Amit 4, Casiano 2.

Scoring by quarters: 13-16, 45-29, 63-47, 83-67.

Third Game

HBR International 77 – Galang 25, Hipolito 13, Rotap 9, Cabanting 9, Roma 6, Agustin 4, Sapo 4, Jaime 3.

MDC 71 – Darag 16, Tengco 14, Mario 13, Kim 11, Martes 6, Elchico 5, Ferrer 2, Adasai 2, Cortez 2.

Scoring by quarters: 15-22, 37-38, 57-56, 77-71.

FRIDAY

The Game 103 – Mintac 31, Sagum 21, Arellano 19, Dayao 15, Sablan 12, Torregos 4, Shamburger 2.

670 Gravity 86 – Torres 53, Solis 8, Agustin 8, Bernardo 7, Galuto 5, Salazar 3, Castillo 2.

Scoring by quarters: 32-16, 59-32, 82-51, 103-86.

BILLIE

From Page 20

oni Rosario finished fourth, fifth, and sixth with scores of 38 points, 34 points, and 30 points, respectively.

Results of the Peewee ATV, Peewee I, Peewee II, Mini I, Mini II, Mini ATV, Big Boy ATV, Veterans, Novice, Intermediate, and Expert Open will be published in the following issues of *Saipan Tribune*.

FMS

From Page 20

Lya Kim, who hit the board in the sixth and 12th minute, respectively.

The Geckos and Napu Riders are in Group A of the Middle School Division, which also has Saipan Community School.

In Group B, Hopwood crushed Chacha Oceanview, 7-1.

Five different players scored for Hopwood with Ha Ye Yelen and Kay Anne Costales delivering two goals apiece for the Hilitai. Shacey Sablan, Susana Arkoh, and Jessica Mirafel contributed one goal each in Hopwood's strong start. Destiny Cabanayan made the lone goal for Chacha.

Action in the Middle School Division will continue this Saturday when Tinian takes on Hopwood at 5:30pm.

Meanwhile, the girls high school division also kicked off its competition last weekend with SIS easing past Mt. Carmel School, 7-0.

Kaithlyn Chavez lifted the Geckos to the lopsided win after bagging five goals in their last Friday game. She scored SIS' first four goals, starting her streak right in the second minute of the match, while her next three came in the sixth, 12th, and 22nd minute, and the last one in the 48th. Piper Clark and Audrey Castro posted the two other goals for SIS after finding their target in the 28th and 35th minute, respectively.

Mt. Carmel and SIS are in Group B along with Tinian, while Group A has MHS 1 and 2, Saipan Southern High School and Kagman High School.

Group A teams were scheduled to play their season opening games last night with MHS 1 taking on MHS 2 and Saipan Southern battling Kagman.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	46	28	.622	—
Boston	47	29	.618	—
Toronto	43	32	.573	3½
Brooklyn	39	36	.520	7½
New York	34	42	.447	13

Southeast Division

y-Miami	48	28	.632	—
Charlotte	39	37	.513	9
Atlanta	38	37	.507	9½
Washington	32	42	.432	15
Orlando	20	56	.263	28

Central Division

Milwaukee	46	28	.622	—
Chicago	43	32	.573	3½
Cleveland	42	33	.560	4½
Indiana	25	51	.329	22
Detroit	20	55	.267	26½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

x-Memphis	53	23	.697	—
Dallas	46	29	.613	6½
New Orleans	32	43	.427	20½
San Antonio	31	44	.413	21½
Houston	20	56	.263	33

Northwest Division

Utah	45	30	.600	—
Denver	45	31	.592	½
Minnesota	43	33	.566	2½
Portland	27	48	.360	18
Oklahoma City	22	53	.293	23

Pacific Division

z-Phoenix	61	14	.813	—
Golden State	48	28	.632	13½
L.A. Clippers	36	39	.480	25
L.A. Lakers	31	43	.419	29½
Sacramento	27	49	.355	34½

x-clinched playoff spot
y-clinched division
z-clinched conference

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Siakam, Raptors beat short-handed Boston in overtime

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Running community welcomes return of Saipan

PAGE 19

Billie perfect for Power Puff Girls

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Billie Inabo Pangelinan returned to her winning ways after topping the Power Puff Girls Class in the March edition of the 2022 Monster Energy Point Series Race last Sunday at the Cowtown Race Track.

The 12-year-old from Dandan Middle School won both heats en route to accumulating 50 points. The January winner bested last month's Power Puff Girls champion Nanako Celis who finished second in both heats to total 44 points. Miyako Celis came in third with 38 points with Emelsha Cepeda and Shaniah Alvarez completing the Top 3 with 34 points and 20 points, respectively.

Aboard her Honda CRF150R, Pangelinan said she didn't really do anything special last Sunday and just tried her best to be in front of the pack.

"A magician never reveals their secrets, but mainly I was trying not to fall. As always, I was just racing to have fun. It was pretty dusty and the track had some additional changes again. So, I was still adapting to the new layout," she said.

Pangelinan gave kudos to her sponsors Ericco Racing Team, Pokka, Marianas Native, and Herman's Bakery.

"I would also love to dedicate this win to my family and friends who came down to my race to watch and support me! I also want to thank my coach, Ellery Cruz, thank for all the support and all that he has taught me," she added.

In the Mini I Class, Stanley Iakopo Jr. duplicated Pangelinan's feat in the Power Puff Girls Class by also winning both heats for 50 points. He was followed by Harley Susulin and Jonoah Santos with 42 points and 40 points, respectively. Te'Ohnn Pua finished fourth with 38 points.

Theresa Borja ruled the Mini ATV Class by also going perfect with 50 points. Anella Igitol was second with 40 points, the same scored by Franchesa Yumul, but the former won the second race to take the higher place. Kassidy Camacho, Kimason Cabrera, and Ke-

See BILLIE on Page 19

MICHAEL JORNAL
Billie Inabo Pangelinan, seen here in a file photo from last month's race, won the Power Puff Girls Class of the 2022 Monster Energy Point Series Race last Sunday at the Cowtown Race Track.

FMS, Hopwood win season debuts

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Hopwood Middle School players chase the ball during their game against Chacha Oceanview Middle School in the NMIFA-PSS Interscholastic Soccer League last Saturday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
A Saipan International School player, right, dribbles away from a Mt. Carmel School defender during their match in the high school division of the NMIFA-PSS Interscholastic Soccer League last Friday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Francisco M. Sablan Middle School and Hopwood Middle School prevailed in their respective season-opening games in the NMIFA-PSS Interscholastic Soccer League last Saturday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

FMS drew first blood in the 2021-2022 season of the ISL after nipping Saipan International School, 4-3. Rosie Saralu powered the Napu Riders to the close victory after scoring three goals, including the game winner in the 25th minute or three minutes after a conversion from Aubrey White allowed the Geckos to tie the match. Saralu made her two other goals in the 15th and 19th minute, while FMS' other goal came from Connie Meteb in the 24th. SIS, on the other hand, drew its two other goals from Phoenix Gross and

See FMS on Page 19

Royal Pacific keeps Super Tech winless

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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

"Smoking" Jun Tabora proved that age is just a number as he scored 35 points to lead Royal Pacific to a 96-73 thrashing of winless Super Tech in the open division of the Inaugural SCLC Basketball League last Thursday at the Gillette Multi-Purpose Gymnasium in Gualo Rai.

Tabora, who is the leading scorer of the masters division while playing for DECM, didn't score in the first quarter, but Royal Pacific still took a 23-14 lead.

When he finally got going in the second with 9 points, it was all she wrote for Super Tech, which trailed 44-18 at the half.

See ROYAL on Page 19

MARK RABAGO
Smoking" Jun Tabora, seen here suiting up for DECM, scored 35 points to lead Royal Pacific to a win over Super Tech in the open division of the Inaugural SCLC Basketball League last Thursday at the Gillette Multi-Purpose Gymnasium in Gualo Rai.